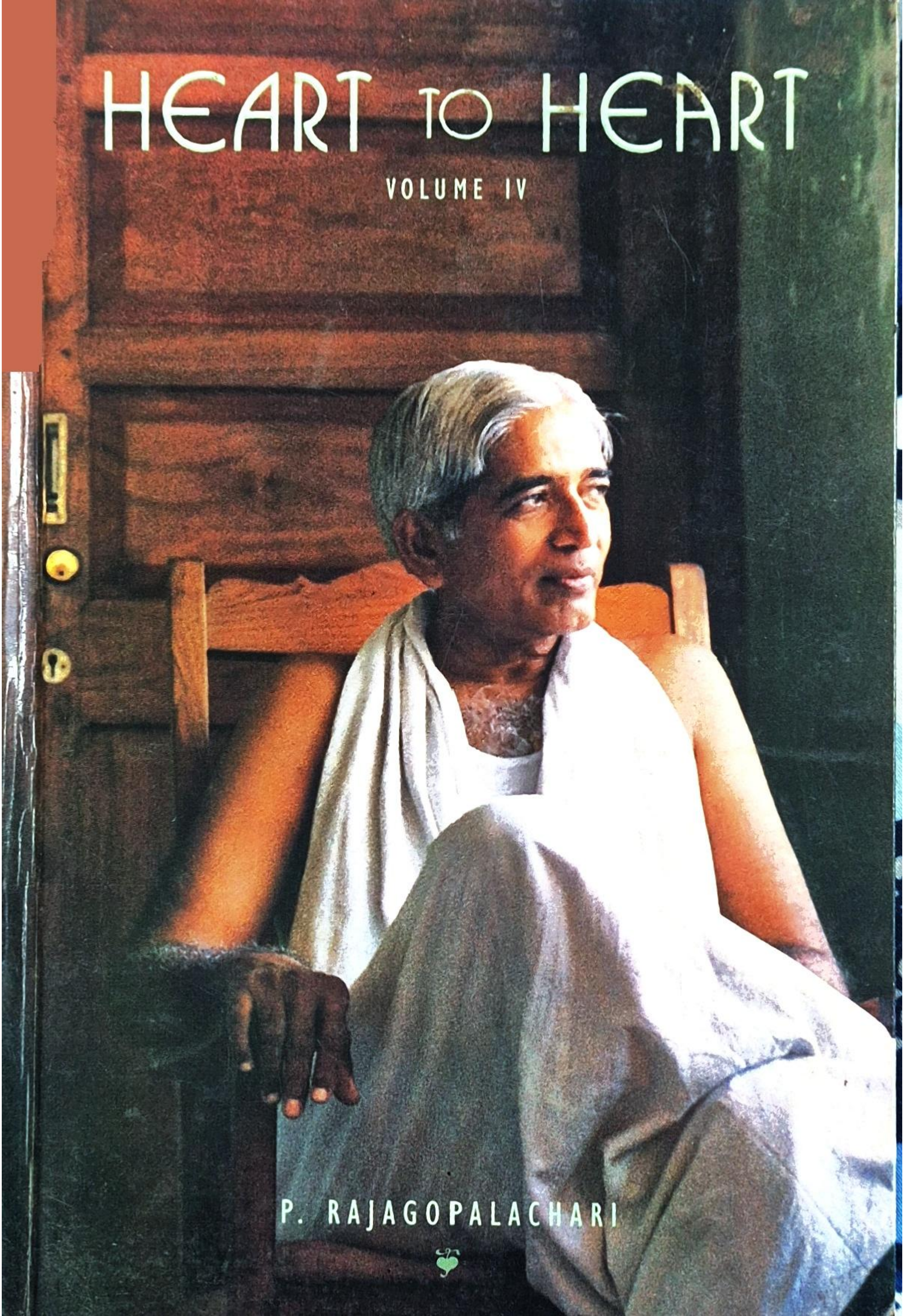
HEART TO HEART

VOLUME IV



P. RAJAGOPALACHARI

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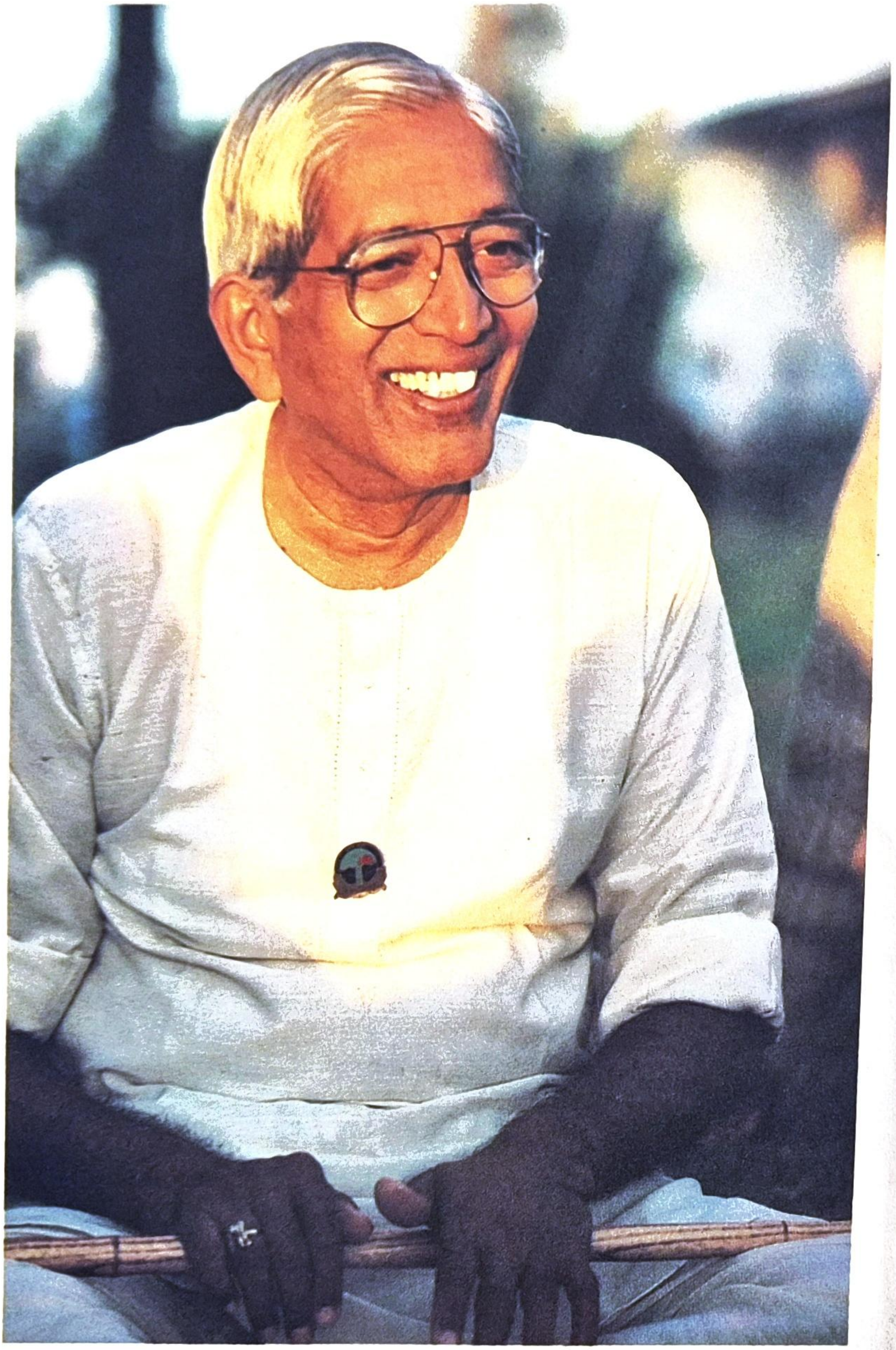

HEART TO HEART

Talks from seminars held in
North America, Europe, Malaysia and Japan
25 September, 1988 to December 1990

given by
Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari

Volume IV

SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION

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I

USA

28 September, 1988

1

ADDRESS TO CANADIAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Smyrna, Georgia, USA
28 September, 1988

I am concerned with the fact that the concerned office-bearer started off by saying that the financial position of the Canadian Mission is strong, and I find a depletion in its resources. The most optimistic view I can take is that it is a position of weakening strength [laughter], if such a thing is possible. The problem is the same in America as in the Canadian Mission, that we have too few abhyasis. And all this talk of serving humanity — you know, we make small things seem big when we talk like that.

It's a matter for thought whether anything is happening in Canada at all, because we started off, I think, some years ago with more or less the same number of abhyasis in the Vancouver area. We have been watching a state of no growth in the middle of Canada, and in the eastern side, in Quebec, we have actually seen a shrinking of the Mission. Of course, I agree with Luc that people who come to make money out of the Tarot readings or things like that felt discouraged, seeing the purity of our goals. And some of them have left. But if we are going to justify the present situation of the Mission by saying that those who were there have left, what about those who should have come in? I have been repeating year after year that if each abhyasi of the Mission brings in one new abhyasi every year: we start with five abhyasis, second year is ten, third year is twenty, fourth year is forty, fifth year is eighty abhyasis. Just in five years ten should have become eighty. But we are seeing a static picture. And actually there is a diminution.

Before we think of these big financial issues we should think of what the Mission is really doing. Are we really working for the people of your country? Is there any effort being made, or are we just scratching the surface, so to speak, the same people meeting everywhere year after year, the same minutes, the same records, the same few thousand dollars being reported, the same few hundred dollars of expenses. It gets a little depressing.

I think the Mission in Canada should invest in Canadian human beings because we are there for that purpose. Dollars and cents have no meaning, and the utilization of those dollars and cents have no meaning unless we see people benefiting from it. Otherwise it becomes like government statistics: per capita consumption of copper has increased, per capita consumption of paper has increased, but the people are still as poor as they were, and statistics don't tell the story, you see; statistics hide the many sins.

So, I think we should go back to the original concept of a no-money service organization. Money is an essential evil, at best, a necessary evil. And as I said the other day, you could run this organization without money. It's not a big problem; or it wouldn't be a big achievement if you did it. There is too much emphasis on monetary resources in most societies today, as if money is the be-all and the end-all of existence. But if that were so, all rich people would be achievers, they would be happy, they would be glowing. But a rich man only has money and doesn't seem to have anything else. So I suggest the Mission should not think so much of the monetary side. Of course, at meetings like this we have to place the facts before the general body, the people, but it seems to me like playing a game of Monopoly, where we have these nicely cut pasteboard pieces, beautifully printed, one representing a hotel, one representing a railway property, and we play for high stakes, and all that we end up with is pieces of cardboard, and there we lose or we gain and we anguish, and weep sometimes, and the winner thinks he is very good.

Yesterday I had the privilege of playing a computer game, "The Olympic Games," where Don the Canadian, and a few others, we all had a javelin throw competition, and Mr. Chari came first, and was awarded the gold medal. Now, that is okay for kids, but when we start playing with the Mission and we feel that we are doing everything that we can or could have done, and that in the whole of Canada we can have only eighty members, not even eighty, I would suggest that we should do some re-thinking. We have so many preceptors, we have so much literature – I know the preceptors are willing, but a willing salesman is not good enough. He must go out into the field and sell. Isn't it? I am a willing salesman, if I tell my boss and I am sitting happy at home, "No, no. Nobody is coming to buy my things. What should I do?" We have to go out. Salesman means going out and selling.

So, we have to make sure that Master's message at least reaches people. For that we have to be a little more open, a little more committed to this work, not in the sense of a proselytizing tour or public speaking and the usual paraphernalia of advertisement, but in an open-hearted way, seeking the avenue of reaching the people, by prayer perhaps, by meditation. I mean, Canada is a large country and there must be millions of Canadians who we haven't even touched. [Abhyasi: It has the population of California.] Yes, but even in California we have twenty abhyasis, or forty maybe. That's not a sufficient comparison. What I mean is, it's not numbers. We don't go by numbers, that's obvious. But numbers do matter, at the same time, that if a Mission has been existing for the last twenty years and the membership is static, there is something that is wrong in the state of Denmark.

So, we have to rectify that situation and we should not forget our primary purpose, the *raison d'être* for our existence. It is the spiritual work for which we are here. It is our spiritual work for which we should approach the people. It is our spiritual work which should justify our existence to ourselves, to the Master, to the governmental authorities of our respective countries, because without that the reason for existence is sort of like the sand which is cut away from under our feet. That would be the final collapse. That would not be nice because it's not enough to serve those who are — you see, I have often felt like the shepherd who must feel that when he comes home and had a hundred sheep in his flock and finds ninety-nine home. He doesn't say, "Oh, well, I have got ninety-nine percent home. Every businessman has a loss of five to six percent; it is only one sheep." Even if the ninety-nine are safely back away in the pen, he goes out looking for the hundredth, and until he finds it he has no rest. Of course, his wife may say, his kids may say, "Daddy, why today, why not tomorrow? We have ninety-nine back home. What's so hot about the hundredth?" Well, you all know how much we struggled for the hundredth life-subscriber, for instance, and we made it precisely because we struggled. I used to see a picture of Jesus Christ in my school, in the old days, where Christ is shown as an old man carrying a lamb on his shoulder, something which had fallen into a ditch and after which he went.

We have to be more, how shall I say, not aggressive — aggressive is not the word; it's not aggressive, it's not a public-mindedness — it is to create in ourselves a restlessness, that here we are, and nobody is there to take this magnificent spiritual wealth that the Master is offering us. We should be restless, just like a mother who has the food ready and the children are not there to eat. She's not aggressive, she is not sales-minded. She says the food is ready and my children are not here, and she won't eat. So we should be like that.

So, I hope the preceptors there and here in the USA will think of how to do it. See, it is not that the Mission must increase, our Mission must grow, our Mission must expand. This is a very wrong concept. The Mission does not expand. The Mission **is**. It is like I am alive, my body may decrease, my body may increase, but if I am not there the increase or decrease of the body has no meaning. So it is not the growth of the Mission, it is how the service that the Mission has to offer reaches more and more people. It is like irrigation. How many hectares of land does a river irrigate? And if that water is going waste… We have river irrigation. How many hectares can we open up to agriculture? Here is this immense resource going waste, running into the sea. So it's not a question of more hectares; it's a question of the utilization of the riverine sources. And here it is the question of the utilization of the spiritual resource, the top resource, the most vital resource, which is going waste.

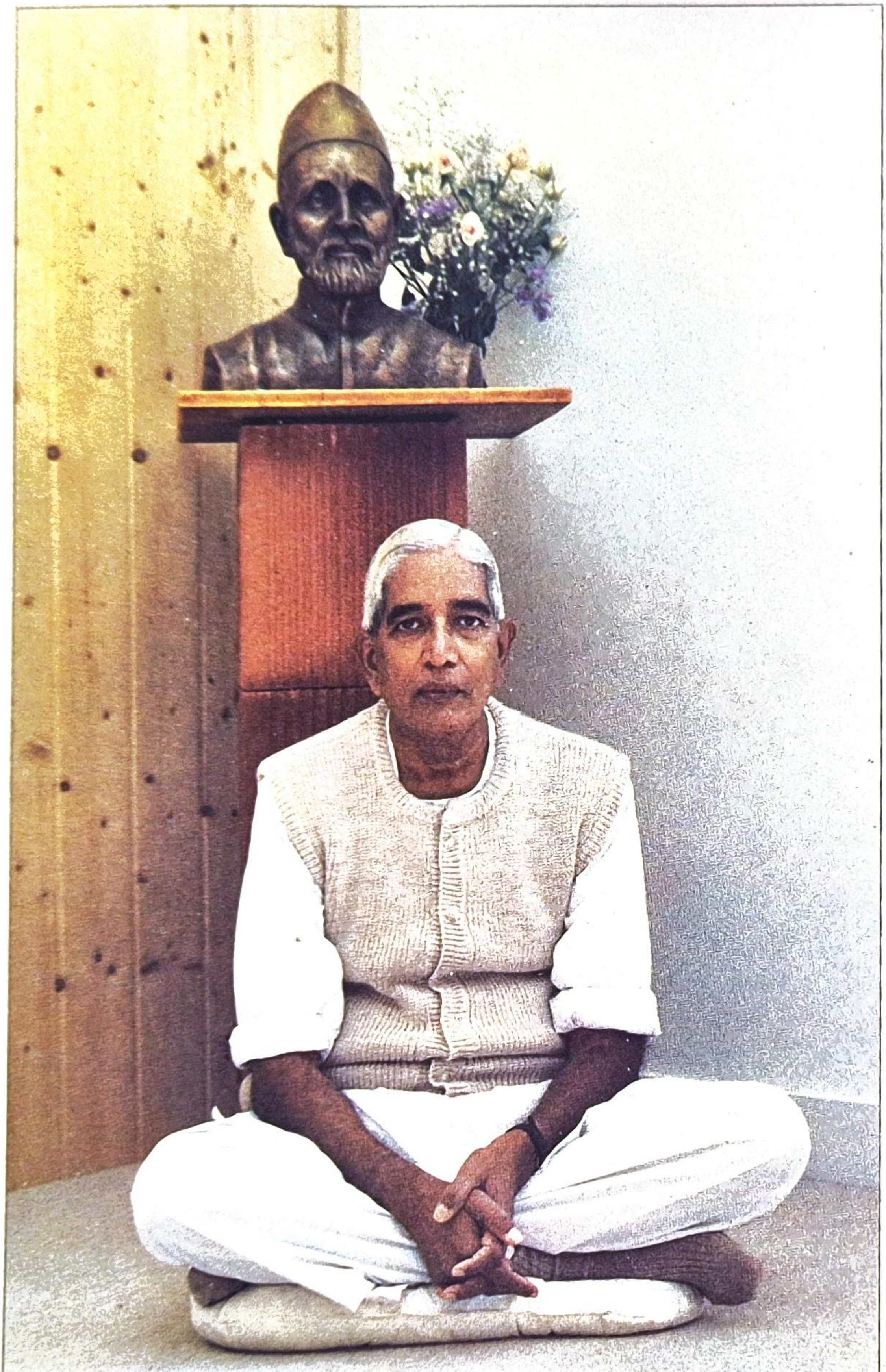
Babuji has said, if people are not there who will receive this, or who are willing to receive it, when I leave I might have to throw it away on the atmosphere for some future, future personality to pick up. You see, that is the situation we are facing. We have everything to give and no one to receive. We have to find the receiver, not of stolen property, but of legitimate, highest divine wealth.

So, it is that restlessness we should begin to feel, that here is the Mission: it has been registered, Babuji Maharaj wanted it. Okay. We have everything hoity-toity. Constitution is there. The law of the land agrees with us. Money can be spent. But on what? So, we have to find that "on what," and then spend the money. So, please look.

II

EUROPE

21 June to 18 July, 1989



2

THE PRIZE

Augerans, France
21 June, 1989

What we have to do in the present situation is something difficult to say at this stage. We have always to try and be determined to achieve the goal at all costs. So that is what is necessary, and one can only hope that we all will have the necessary courage to do all that is necessary by way of sacrifices that are called upon by the spiritual path. It is important to understand that the Master does not ask for any sacrifices to be made — it is the PATH itself, and our aspiration itself, that demands that a permanent choice be made as to what is our goal in life, and for us to stick to that goal with faith and determination. It will be a tragic deviation from the path which we have ourselves chosen, if we allow merely mundane objectives to swerve us from the spiritual path; for if we lose it once, we may never find it again for several lives, and that too only if the fates are kind to us.

I request all of you to remember that very important truth that Babuji Maharaj has stated so plainly for all of us: Even if you have to give your head for it, it would still be too cheap a price to pay for spirituality. The greatest emperors of all ages have had to give up their kingdoms for this thing, and they thought they had it at a very cheap price. The time for taking the right decision is NOW!

3

MEANING OF YOGA

Vienna, Austria
11 July, 1989

First of all, I would like to say there is a great deal of misunderstanding about what yoga means. Even in India we think it is something like religion. And today all over the world there is a swing away from religion, largely because we are disappointed with what religion has promised but has not fulfilled. And more because of the corruption within the religious orders themselves. Therefore, whatever be the religion, people are tending to move away from the churches and the temples. And when we come to systems like the spiritual one we are offering to you here, people come with a lot of suspicion.

Unfortunately, many of the words and the terminology that we use are borrowed from religion and are similar to the religious words. Words like meditation, prayer, God, and that makes a very difficult beginning for most new entrants. Unfortunately, though the words are the same, they do not have the same meaning. The second problem is, everybody talks of meditation. What is it that we are here offering new to you? What is the speciality of this system? They say, after all, meditation is meditation.

So you see, to start yogic practice requires a great deal of open-heartedness, open-mindedness, remembering that the words may be the same but the meanings can be enormously different. Religion speaks of meditation, but what they mean generally is repetition of something. There are many spiritual ways where the repetition is of a mantra or a name. And even though the names or the mantras may differ from system to system, the new entrant is liable to ask, "What is the difference? They are all names. They are all mantras."

It would be as amusing as to say, "What are you all? You are all having different names, so what?" A name is a name. There is an enormous difference between what we mean by meditation and what another system means by meditation. And there is an even greater difference in what we do. So these are some of the things which we would request your attention. Because without a proper understanding it is like an Indian who goes to a fruit shop, sees different types of fruit, and says a fruit is a fruit. In fact, when I first saw the artichoke I did not know whether it was a fruit or a vegetable, or whether it is edible at all. So we have to probe a little deeper into things before we can become critical about them.

The second great problem is, people do not know why they go for yoga — as indeed very few of us knew why we went for religion. I would like to remind you that a child is not born into any particular religion. A child is born and, in some mysterious way, the religion of the parents is thrust upon that child. There is no religious freedom in that sense at all. The child is baptized or goes to the temple and has its head shaven, more as a matter of social conformity than out of belief, and it does not know why it is doing all of these things. Unfortunately, even the parents do not know it, because they too have only followed a convention and done it themselves when they were young.

So we see this very unfortunate and tragic circumstance, that we are only handing on ignorance from generation to generation. I often feel that the disappointment with religion is because of this fact, too. Because very often children are taught to look upon a church or a temple like a bank. You go there to get some benefit, but it is not the function of religion to give you benefits, nor is it the function of spirituality to do so. Originally, religions were established for the spiritual development of human beings. That was the great idea, the aim of the great founders of the religions, like Buddha, like Christ, like Mohammed the prophet. They were all elevated people, spiritually developed people, saints. But when the teaching becomes solidified like dogma and theology, man is satisfied with reading books and performing rituals.

This is the problem of religion on one side and it is the problem of ours vis-à-vis religion in the other side. Spirituality, in our understanding, is a new beginning to correct the situation. That is, we seek to dissolve all the hardness and grossness that has crept into religion and go back to the original purity of the thought and the practice that was given by the original creators of these systems, remembering that the founders of religion did not belong to those religions themselves.

You will all agree that Buddha was not a Buddhist. And if Buddha could achieve nirvana and *maha parinirvana* without being a Buddhist, why can we not get it without being Buddhists? Similarly, I do not believe that Christ was a Christian. His teaching has become Christianity. Christ was a simple man, Buddha was a simple man. They practised certain things, had certain aspirations in their hearts, and the spiritual development of both followed more or less similar lines. They meditated, went, in each case, one to the jungle, one to the mountain. Strangely, both spent forty days in their respective isolation. Both were tempted, not merely with vacuum cleaners and refrigerators and beautiful cars, or even beautiful chandeliers, but by the dominion of the whole world which was promised to them. Both rejected the temptation. And both are remembered today after thousands of years. They are remembered. Their teaching has hardened into religion, but the practice they gave us has been forgotten. That is, the practice of meditation, the practice of some temporary isolation, the practice of overcoming the ultimate temptation. And therefore we have the tragic situation that we have only rock, stone, petrification, where there should be the real, living spirit.

Most of you are from the Christian background and I would request you to remember that the spirit is what matters in Christianity, not the word. So when we come to spirituality all that we are trying is to put, metaphorically speaking, the clock back to the time of the Buddha, the Christ, the Prophet. Not to renounce the world, but to transcend the world. Because there is often a misunderstanding about renunciation. And when we talk of renunciation, people say, "But how can I go without a car? How can I do without a telephone?" In the spiritual language, renunciation does not mean this rather mundane idea of renunciation. It means detaching your mind and your attachment from these things. After all, neither Christ nor the Buddha renounced the world because they were still living here on this planet. They did not die immediately. They had to live long enough to teach other people, make followers, and at least help some of them to achieve their own spiritual status. But if we study their life we understand what renunciation really means. It means living in a detached way. They were also eating and drinking. They had clothes, but the minimum necessary for life.

Today also it is possible to live in that fashion. It does not mean you should not use an iron to press your clothes or a *strassenbahn* to go to the Centrum. It only means do not be, what should I say, tempted or seduced by these material affluences, because if the electricity breaks down, everything breaks down. We have had examples of this even in the United States once, when some years back there was a breakdown of electricity for, I believe, eighteen or nineteen hours. And the astonishing thing is how people reverted to the primitive, crude, cruel stages. Because taking advantage of that there was a lot of robbery, there were a few rapes, there were a few murders, and any number of shops were looted of their contents.

A real civilization means you must behave in the dark as you behave when it is light. A truly civilized man does not change with the darkness or with the light. The test of a civilized person is whether he behaves in the same way with all people. Civilization, civilize — to be civilized means to be civil, first of all. Not one behaviour with a white man, another with a black man, third with a Negro, fourth with a Chinaman. Protecting the white man's rights against the black man's invasion. Selfishly holding on to your standard of living against the rest of the world's interests. These are hardly signs of civilization, but they are signs of the selfish human being who at all cost is determined to survive. It does not matter what happens to the rest of the world.

Spirituality says, go back to the original source. The great saints starved so that others may eat. They left their homes so that others could have homes. And they achieved that high spiritual divine state from which they could divinise other people. Whereas, the much advertised civilization of today can only give you something more by way of comfort, little better things to eat, little softer clothes to wear, some colour on your face. But it is robbing the inside of all its true values.

I often have a feeling that when you embellish the outside and the external, material life, such a civilization is not really robbing others, but each individual in that civilization is robbing something from within himself or herself — qualities of the heart that make a human being a human being. We lose our kindness, the ability to love, the ability to be generous, the ability to be charitable.

But, more and more, we want to now get charity and mercy and love. I do not think anything more is necessary to be said in this matter, because it is obvious that the more you deny these things to others, the more you deny it to yourself.

The more you deny love to others, the less love you get, the more you need it. The more you deny charity, the more you deny mercy, the more you deny compassion to all the suffering human beings of this world, the more you need it yourselves.

Therefore, we have this paradox of the Western, high tech, very cultured society, that they have everything except love, except mercy, except compassion; and, therefore, you have this enormous paradox of the most satisfied, fulfilled, well-fed human race on Earth, being at the same time the most miserable society.

Spiritual law says that the more you take, the less you get. The more you give, the more you get. This is the spiritual law. So you see, we are trying to establish — God realisation, as my brother Jaffar said, is the final goal, no doubt. But we have more immediate, nearer, proximate goals, to make real human beings of so-called human beings. Excuse me for saying this, but my Master said that just to be a biped, walking on two feet, with two hands, and a lovely head on the top of the body is not to be a human being. A strong body, a beautiful face, a beautiful intellect within that skull is not enough, because you have all this. You have this beyond any possible imagination of the past races of human beings. Having all this, if you are still miserable, that is only due to one fact. That what should be here to distinguish human beings from other bipeds, other two-legged things like monkeys and apes, is the heart.

When man has grown progressively more selfish, more self-centred, more materialistic in his ambitions, he has not just robbed his own material wealth or the wealth of the world, but he has profligately spent of the wealth of his heart, so that today there is nothing in the heart. Therefore, all this human misery.

This system of Sahaj Marg, which my Master has perfected and offered to us, therefore emphasizes the sole and predominate position of the heart in the human existence. And unless the heart be restored to its original purity, to its original importance, filled again with the Divine presence, which alone can give us the courage to face the realities of a spiritual existence — that is, to make us courageous, to be charitable, to be generous, to be merciful, to be open-hearted — human beings have no future. Forget the atomic bombs and the neutron bombs and AIDS. At most they can only kill bodies. But what we are doing with our wrong goals, wrong temperament, wrong attitudes to the rest of human beings, and therefore to ourselves, will surely deprive us of what little remains of humanity within us. And then perhaps reverse the trend of evolution, so that instead of evolving from the monkey to the human being we shall evolve backwards from human level into the animal kingdom. I must apologize to you when I say that we are already considerably advanced on that process.

Therefore, my Master says yoga is not a matter of choice but of necessity. Fortunately for us we have a system in which we do not depend only on our own efforts. By the Master's grace, his help is available at all stages in a very practical way by the cleaning process, about which my sister Renate spoke to you. All the filth and dirtiness we have accumulated in our hearts can be cleaned off in practically no time. And by his transmission of his own divine essence, it is possible to fill that purified heart once again with Divine love, which will give us the ability, the courage, and the possibility once more not to walk as, you know, somewhat crazy conquerors of this world or of nature, but as conquerors of ourselves.

This is the invitation that my Master Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj extends to you, and which Sahaj Marg as a system makes available to you, and which I am willing to guarantee the success of, provided we have your full co-operation.

Thank you.

(Talk given at public meeting.)

4

TRANSMISSION AND CLEANING

Munich, Germany
13 July, 1989

You have heard my sister Gabi and my brother Otto Reicheneder speak to you about Sahaj Marg. I would just add some brief comments, not on their speech, because I did not understand German, but what I think they did not say.

There is a general tendency to think of all systems as one more system, you see, especially when we say Sahaj Marg is a system of raja yoga. There is an immediate tendency to dismiss it and say, "Aha! One more system of raja yoga." It is a human tendency to do this.

I remember when I first came to Europe, probably forty years back, I went to a restaurant in, I think, Switzerland, in Bern. I was offered a menu and a nice waitress asked me, "Which soup would you like?" I said, "What does it matter which soup it is?"

So to dismiss a system of raja yoga like that as, what should I say, a beginner's choice of soup, or to think that all the wines are the same, or all beers are the same — there is so much difference between one and the other that there is a whole art of wine tasting. So, that the foundation is the same does not mean that the super-structure is the same.

So, when we say that Sahaj Marg is another system based on raja yoga, it is, of course, the absolute truth, but there is something beyond that also, and it is that difference within the sameness that we seek to emphasize. For instance, you have already heard about the cleaning, about the transmission. Here again there are possibilities of being dismissed, because after all, cleaning is cleaning, but if you go into it a little deeper, I have found that this system of cleaning does not exist at all anywhere else. It certainly existed thousands of years back, but then it became ritualized into external habits: sprinkling with water, muttering some mantras.

So you see, the inner truth became reflected in an outer ritual which had lost its meaning, its sense. Similarly transmission. It is too common a word for us to take it seriously, because everything in life is a transmission. When we teach, we are transmitting knowledge, or trying to transmit knowledge. When you give food, you are transmitting the life-giving force. Power is being transmitted from the generating source to the utilizing end of the power system.

It is necessary to understand what exactly Sahaj Marg offers by way of transmission. My Master says it is the absolute, ultimate, forceless force of Divinity. Perhaps some of you have been able to feel it during the meditation that we just had. But I must add that we do not sit in meditation for experience. As my Master used to say, rather humorously but very seriously, there is a very definite way in which electricity can be experienced. When we get a shock, it is not desirable. But we enjoy all the fruits of electricity, like illumination and so many other gadgets that we use. In fact, today in our civilization we can hardly exist without electricity. We know or perceive the existence of electricity by all these marvelous things that we see hanging from the roof. In fact, we take very careful precautions so that our children do not touch electricity and feel it.

In Sahaj Marg, we certainly have some experiences, but they are like the scenery that you see on the way when you travel by your car or by train, remembering that these are available only when you are very low down to the Earth. And if you are fortunate enough to be out on a satellite, way up in space, you are not going to see anything at all. I was once offered an opportunity to travel free in a Concorde flight across the Atlantic. I refused because I was told it has no windows.

So you see, we are all, in a sense, attached to experiences, addicted to experiences. Sightseeing, as we say. But when we go up and beyond these planetary environments, really there will be nothing to see. Those of you who have had sea voyages know this. You know, you leave the dock behind, and in ten minutes there is nothing except flat expanses of water.

This is another difference between Sahaj Marg and everything else: that while there are experiences possible, we are constantly cautioning our abhyasis not to give any relevance to them, not to give any importance to them. I believe it is an important aspect of the training system that reality as such must be experienced, not the manifestations of reality. And the first step is to divorce experience from the sensory field of experience.

These are some of the important aspects of our system, I would even say unique aspects of the system. The cleaning system, which to my knowledge does not exist anywhere else, confers upon us the ability to clean our inner system, the spiritual system, of all what we call 'grossness' that has been deposited by our past thoughts and actions.

There is no use in keeping the body clean. I mean, humanity has existed for thousands of years with coarse bodies, smelly bodies. And in fact, psychologists will tell you that the super attention to external cleaning generally shows an inner guilt feeling. I am not suggesting that a bath is not necessary, you see, [chuckles] it is very necessary, but it is not the end of cleanliness. The inner health has to reflect in the outer health. It is a well-known truism that the health of the skin depends upon inner health. If there is no inner health, not all the Vitamin E application to the face will change the complexion of your skin. Not all the mouthwash will change the odour of your breath if the stomach is dirty. And of course, if the spirit or soul has these deposits of grossness inside, then the beautiful body is no longer beautiful.

This system of yoga, the Sahaj Marg system, makes available a cleaning process which goes right to the core of our existence. It is very much like lighting a lamp. You light the wick and then the light, the illumination, flows out through the enclosing glass. But no amount of polish in the glass will make the lamp light unless you have at least one matchstick with you to set it alight. The effect of this cleaning is something you have to feel. It is a very simple process. Every one of you can do it yourselves, and in every sitting or every meditative state that you adopt to do the cleaning, when you get up out of it you will see a distinct difference in your condition.

The second important fact about transmission is that the guru transmits his own inner spiritual essence into us. These two processes put together have made evolution under Sahaj Marg system so fast that it is unimaginable. My Master was always skeptical about systems which offer liberation and realisation in many lives. Nobody knows for certain whether we are only having one life or many lives. In Sahaj Marg it is not necessary to believe in a future life or in a past life, but we cannot but help believing in this life in which we are now living. And my Master used to say (like all the material goals which you want to achieve) in **this** life, not in your next life.

The spiritual goal should also be achievable in this life. This is what Sahaj Marg offers. The two most important facets being the cleaning and the transmission, remembering that they can do nothing unless we have the abhyasi's, the participant's total co-operation.

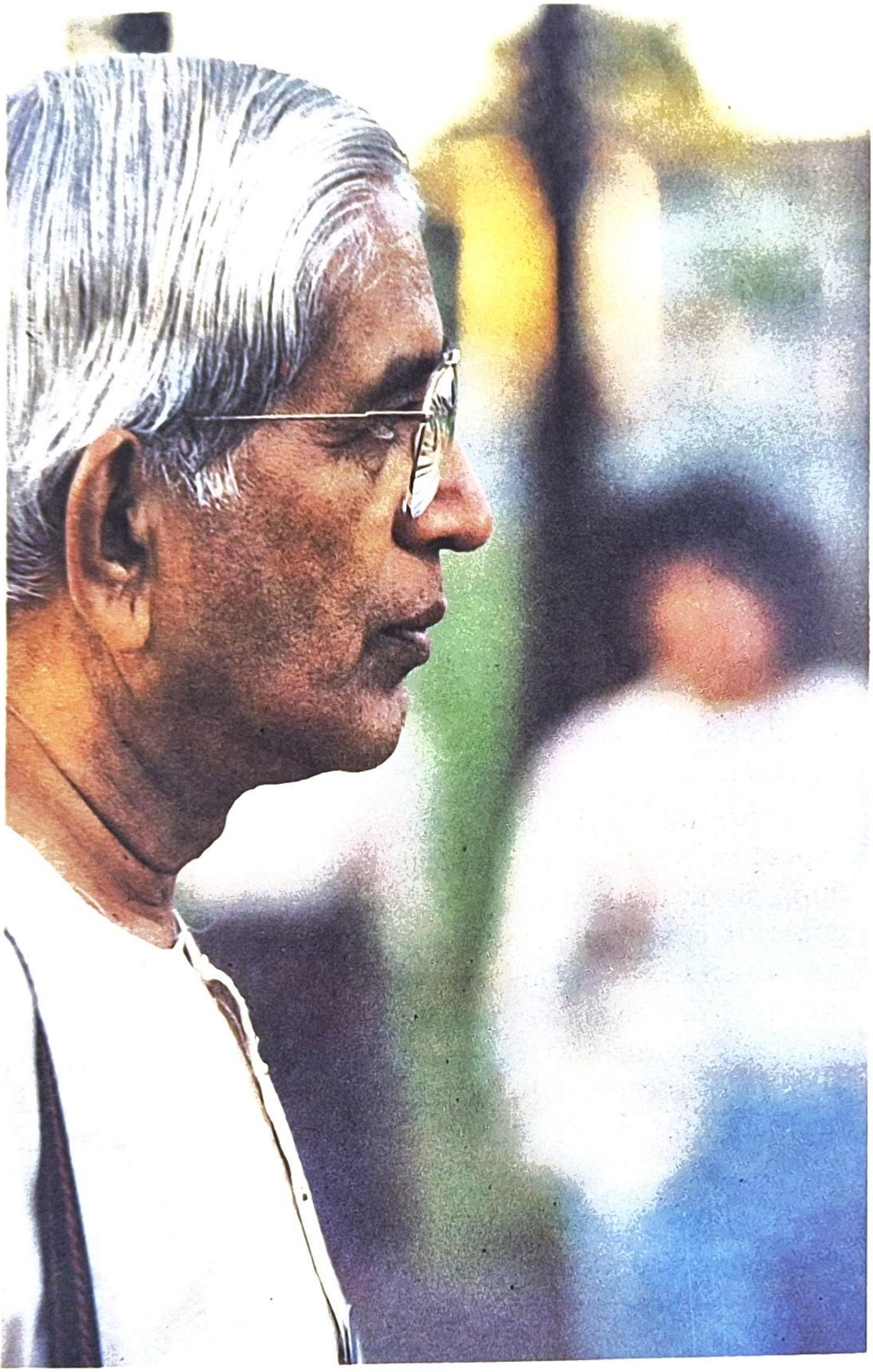
So, it is to this system of practice that we invite you to participate, without any commitment to the guru or to the system until you have proved it in your own experience. As we say in the English language, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it." Here the proof is with you. No amount of claiming by the Master or the guru is alone enough for a system.

When I first approached my Master, whose photograph you see here, I asked him, "How long will I have to be with you as a disciple?" He said, "Forget this guru and disciple relationship. Start off as one who practises the system, adopting me as your guide. Try it with your whole heart for some months. If you find benefit, please continue. If not, we part as friends." Then I asked him how much I have to pay for this course of training. He said, "Spirituality cannot be sold." So there are no fees, there are no entrance charges, there is no membership. All we need is your presence and our presence together.

So, that is the experiment or the divine journey that we expect or invite you to participate in, remembering one final thing about the system — that it does not promise any material goals. It is a purely spiritual system, offering a spiritual goal. And even to call it God realisation, I don't know what it really means. I prefer to say it is a system of evolution, which in my Master's words, "Makes a human being with animal tendencies into a human being with human tendencies and then perfects him to the ultimate perfection possible to a human being."

Thank you very much.

(Talk given at public meeting.)



5

WAY OF THE HEART

Zurich, Switzerland
18 July, 1989

I come from India, and it is a land of fascinating mixtures and opposites. For instance, you will find there the most sublime beautiful things and the utter rubbish and dirt that we associate nowadays with my country. We have the crudest and the most stupid ritualistic forms of worship and the sublimest philosophies and the spiritual practices perhaps not known outside that land.

I had the good fortune to meet my Master in 1964. I said good fortune because before that I was also studying yoga, trying to practise certain *asanas* on my own, doing *pranayama*, doing some mantras, etc. And at one stage I was almost facing psychic disorders within myself and it was quite alarming, the symptoms were quite alarming. I had the good fortune to stumble across some books on fundamental psychology, and especially to come across the works of Dr. Jung, which in a sense helped me to regain some sort of stability.

It was at that time that I went to my Master by accident. The first warning he gave me when he looked into my condition was, "Avoid all these practices." For two reasons:

first, I did not have a guide who could guide me through the labyrinths of all these practices, and the second was that the practices were, as he called them, gross. It was my Master's first teaching, that God or Divinity or the Self or the soul, whatever you want to call it, is the subtlest, and the way of achieving that subtleness must be through a subtle means.

He used the analogy of threading a needle, or in another sense, trying to pick up a needle which has fallen on the ground, with a crane. I can also say he reversed this old saying in English which says, "The end must justify the means," in a sense, saying that the means determine the end that we are going to achieve. He used to smile rather sardonically when I told him about this old statement that all roads lead to Rome. I had met a lot of teachers of yoga and things like that in India, and there was this very satisfying statement that everything leads to God ultimately. I had been mislead by this and therefore I had fallen a victim to so many practices, to so many people who tried to guide me, not being my guru but casual guides. As I said, I was in a mess when I reached my Master in 1964, and it was his patience and his love that made him work upon me for a couple of years before perhaps I became fit to start this spiritual journey.

It was at his feet, as we say in India, that I was taught the difference between religion and spirituality. Later on, I was to learn that there is another thing called spiritism, with which we are more familiar in the Occidental countries, dealing with occult phenomenon, spirits, ghosts, all these sort of things. Because it is necessary to distinguish three things: religion, spirituality, spiritism. Perhaps we in India are qualified more that anybody else to talk about religion because we have so much of it and we have had it for so long — literally thousands of years.

But unfortunately, as we say, few learn the lessons of history, because after coming to my Master, when I started looking into the past of my land there were clear, unmistakable indications about the way Hinduism, as it was being practised, had robbed the thing of its beauty, of its essence, of its value, of its effectiveness. One had only to see that out of Hinduism, Buddhism was born, Jainism was born. The two great outstanding spiritual leaders, Buddha and Mahavira, having been disillusioned, disenchanted, perhaps nauseated with the current temple practices which impelled them to break away from the mainstream of that religious existence to which they had been born.

Perhaps, with the onset of the Aquarian age, there is now again a break away from Hinduism in this sense. Because my Master is very definite and very emphatic that though God is unchangeable, immutable, eternal, we cannot say He exists in a tangible way — 'tangible' meaning perceptible to the senses. It was teaching that God cannot be seen with these eyes, touched with these sensory organs that we have, and that the only way, shall we say, of recognizing His presence is by experience of His presence. I think for him it was a natural development of the technique of yoga, that as human beings develop in their own spiritual evolution from the very crude concepts of divinity to what we today think of as sublime concepts, but which may be, in the future, again crude to those of the future. The method or the technique of trying to achieve that divine presence has to change as our concept of the divinity or God changes.

It was his teaching that when we thought of God as being embodied in physical objects, the human mind of those times naturally turned to worship of external objects, embodying them with the divinity — which is, of course, undeniable. But times change, concept of God changes. We tend to grow from the gross to the subtle, and that is how the technique of raja yoga evolved in India.

He used to caution me about one thing: that Patanjali's yoga is absolute is an accepted fact in India, a generally accepted fact. My Master was the first one to point out to me that Patanjali was only a codifier of yogic systems and he had put together a mass of information of knowledge of those times, perhaps four thousand years ago, and that came to be known as the way of the *ashtanga* yogas. The eight-fold path.

It begins with *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, all these things. Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, you know, yama and niyama are dealing with the ethical development of the individual, moral conduct. Asana being certain recommended positions that we have to adopt. Pranayama being the control of the breathing and to the subsequent four stages: *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi* as they are called in Sanskrit. It cannot be translated because they are Sanskrit terms.

In most of our literature pertaining to yoga, you'll find that these are delineated as the absolutely necessary eight steps for pursuit by an aspirant. My Master said it was not necessary. He therefore started with dhyana, meditation, because it was his teaching that when you start with ethical principles, like don't tell lies, don't hurt your neighbour, don't steal somebody else's property… He said these are not things which are to be taught in the yoga schools, where we talk of divinity, but things to be learned at home under the family atmosphere.

He considered it rather a fall in the Indian ethos that one had to learn to speak the truth, because it was his firm conviction that it should be natural to tell the truth — not something you have to learn. He said often that the human being is not any more a human being, because when a human being has to be told not to tell lies but to tell the truth, not to kill but to protect life, he considered that in some way there was a fall from the human values to the baser instincts. He put this very pithily, in a very short statement that, "A human being is born as a human being, but most of us die as animals." Excuse me, I am telling you what he said.

How much of it is relevant to today's society you will all be able to assess for yourselves, of course, remembering that we should not tell lies to ourselves about what we are. No honest human being can today avoid the conviction that there has been a tremendous degradation in moral values, leave alone spiritual values. The old statement, "Dog eats not dog," is no longer valid, because today human beings prey on human beings. We have finished off more of the lesser forms of existence. One has only to wander through the forests of Europe to see what little life there is, how little there is left of it.

If a Shelley or a Byron were to be present today, they would probably weep out their hearts in writing a different sort of poetry. Many of you must be familiar with that famous poem, *The Ode to the Skylark.* "Hail to thee blithe spirit," it begins. This is just, by the way, a digression because it pinpoints how we have traversed the past, say, fifty years. Much is blamed on World Wars I and II, no doubt justifiably, but not entirely the fault of the wars. Because my Master said, "Why did the wars happen?" Because, as you will be told or you have been told again and again, wars are the result of expansionist policies of various governments. At one stage it was geographic; perhaps today it is economic. That is all the difference, you see.

To come back to the essence of my Master's teaching, that man is born as a man but dies as an animal, he started his spiritual training with this instruction, that we must first work in such a way as to restore ourselves to a human level of existence, where speaking the truth is a natural thing. Not taking away somebody's property is a natural thing. Living happily with what we have becomes a natural thing. All the other things — helping others, being compassionate, being loving, being merciful — all these must become a natural thing, not something to be learned from books of religion or through social teachings. He said, "Then begins the purpose of yoga."

Often, I feel that when we speak like this before audiences about the techniques of yoga and this sublime value of divinity, etc., we are perhaps putting the cart before the horse. Therefore, in Sahaj Marg, in this method of raja yoga, as our sisters have explained to you, the focus of all self-development effort is the heart. Because it is the heart, the organ *par excellence*, which is signifying, which is denoting human values. It is not fallacious that we describe an individual by the heart: good-hearted, kind-hearted, cold-hearted, warm-hearted. Somebody has a heart of stone. Another has a soft heart. You see, a human being is what his or her heart is.

But today we look to the outer form and the outer values, the dimensions of the external appearance. The beauty of the human being has been brought to the face and the figure. The power of existence is represented by the power that we wield, monetarily and in other ways. And my Master used to suffer in a certain amount of sorrow at this putting away of the heart into some sort of iron box and locking it up. He said that all the subsequent degradation is because we have lost touch with our hearts. We have, therefore, to re-establish contact with that heart and whatever may be inside — we call it Divine, perhaps the soul. I don't think it is an accident that all the traditions of this world speak of the Divine presence in the human being as being in the heart of the human being.

The ancient Indian tradition goes much further, and says it is in the heart of every created thing. Animals, insects, stone — anything, you see. It is called *dharma* — that which upholds. A stone is a stone, not because it is a stone, but because there is something in it which makes it a stone. When we turn to the vast avenues of science, I was myself enticed by the magnificence of science, so appealing to an intellect that we believe a stone is a stone because it is a stone. A peculiar sort of syllogism, you see; nobody asks why it is not something else. Because we have been hearing of the transmutation of metals and things like that, transmutation of metals into gold, for instance.

So, the ancient traditions of India say that without this Divine presence at the heart of everything, nothing can exist. Therefore, the Hindu mind says that God is greater than the greatest, smaller than the smallest, too. He's both inside and outside His creation. And if this be true, yoga says why not look inside? Why do you want to search outside? Because to search outside you have to wander the face of the Earth, pit your intelligence against so many systems of worship, religions, practices, rituals. Evaluate them. Do we have the time for all this when it is very simple to go inside and look for it? So this is why raja yoga goes, at least this Sahaj Marg system of yoga goes, to the heart.

So, in our system we don't use the other points for meditation which traditional hatha yoga speaks of, because again, they are turning us outside. We try to seek Him in this inner temple which we call the heart. So, Sahaj Marg yoga is the way of the heart in this sense. My Master said, "It is so simple."

Remember that the five senses are given to you to know the world. They are the most wonderful instruments God has given us, but they are only useful to know the outside world. It is a famous statement in the Vedas, that with these eyes we can see the entire universe, but we cannot see the eye itself. If we extrapolate that thought a little, we can say that with this intellect we can know everything outside ourselves, but we cannot know ourselves. Therefore, in the Greek tradition, in the Oracular tradition, 'know thyself' became a great virtue. But my Master went a step further and said, "What is the use of knowing yourself?" Because, in our heart, every one of us knows what we are.

I remember reading a novel when I was young, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, where a young man leads a licentious life, but by some strange quirk of destiny there is a painting of him in this beautiful condition when he was youthful, beautiful, handsome, endowed with all the virtues of youth.

But as he gets into deeper and deeper degradation of his own existence the picture changes. He remains youthful, handsome, beautiful, fresh as a rose, but the picture becomes horrible. Ultimately he is afraid of looking at it himself. Every night he goes on his licentious life, comes back in the morning, throws open this picture, which he has veiled carefully, and suffers the anguish of the damned, as they said in Christianity. Eventually it is so bad that he plunges a knife into the picture's heart and himself falls dead. Then there is this enormous frightening transformation, that this beautiful, youthful body on the floor becomes as aged and ugly as evil itself, and the picture regains its original beauty.

So you see, when we keep this [outside] beautiful, and inside corrupt, this is a possible destiny that we face. My Master felt that most of our isolation of today — not being able to be with people, this unnecessary and un-understandable need for absolute privacy — to him these were signs of an inner despair, that we are trying to hide ourselves within ourselves.

So you see, we go back to the heart, not by some arcane technique of mantra, or this or that, but as my Master said, by just diverting all these tendencies which are now going outward inwards. When we sit in meditation this is what we try to do, you see, try to re-establish a contact of the existing outer self with the inner deeper Self, which is the real Self.

I have found often that people, after they have been established in this practice for a few weeks, few days, sometimes a few months, often the very first sign of a little progress is, they begin to weep without knowing why they are weeping. They often weep without knowing they are weeping. The tears just flow and they don't what's happening inside, you see. My Master said this is the first sign of the humanization of the heart. It is becoming soft. This softening of the heart is something we have to achieve.

Unfortunately, today in our societies we are taught that a person with a soft heart will be taken to be simple, will be taken to be a fool, and even be exploited. Therefore, we are afraid of opening ourselves up to any external influence. We are afraid to be kind, we have forgotten how to be sympathetic, and when we cannot weep for another, how can we weep for ourselves? The great teaching of life is that what you cannot do for somebody else, you cannot do for yourself ever. It is therefore, perhaps, that we do so much outside but we are not happy inside.

No external activity today satisfies the human being. Acquisition of wealth only leads to more desire for more wealth. Power is going on being multiplied without any limits. Everything — possessions, love life — anything you wish to name. It seems to operate on the old economic principle of declining values. The more we get, the less we really get. Eventually we find, to our utter despair, that we have everything but we really have nothing. Spirituality reverses this equation and makes a very bold statement that he who has nothing has everything.

My Master used to say that people are afraid of being alone, of being lonely, as we say, but he said, "Remember that your association with God is really a love affair, and the lover goes to the beloved only when the beloved is alone." That is the sacredness of love in the Eastern traditions. Love cannot be, must not be, a public affair. The symbolism is used again and again of a tiny flame which has to be protected by a glass chimney, because in the beginning it is delicate. We have these love stories of the East — Layla and Majnun, for instance — and so many of your own Western stories of a princess being locked up in an ivory tower three hundred meters above the ground, and a young man coming to her all alone, braving all the dangers. If it is true of the human love, my Master said, how much more true of the divine lover?

Tradition speaks of Lord Krishna coming to his beloved at midnight. Of course, in the West people may laugh and say, "Who has the patience to wait till midnight nowadays?" But in love, as in everything else of value, the ability to wait denotes the value that you set upon a particular object. I think it is an indication of the general degeneration in the human values and assessment of human values that today we are in a society in which instant coffee, instant tea, instant babies — everything is instant. I don't know if the psychologists will agree with this evaluation by me. I'm a layman. But it is a well-known assessment of the human mind in the East that what we value very much we are willing to wait for, and if something is not worth waiting for it is not worth having.

So, the technique of our meditation is to empty the heart of everything that is in it. My Master often said we have to wait. Essentially, the act of meditation is an act of waiting for the beloved to come. My Master used to explain it very beautifully to simple, unlettered people, saying, "Suppose you invite a great man to your house for dinner. What would you do?" We would clean our house, we would cook good food, we would lay the table and wait for them to arrive. He said, "In spirituality it is exactly the same." The greater the guest, the longer sometimes we have to wait, or at least the longer we must be prepared to wait.

If it is the ultimate truth that we are inviting, the aspirant's attitude must be one of patience, prepared to wait forever if necessary. So, patience comes with the evaluation of that which we are trying to achieve. One who is impatient is easily satisfied with any trash that is going around, anything that is available. That's why, I think, the Americans call it a 'pick-up'. In the old days in India, we used to call pick-ups newspaper pieces which we picked off the ground to clean the gardens. So you see, language reveals a great deal of truth which we have also forgotten to appreciate.

That is why, in the way of the heart, it is a way of love. One has to learn to love without knowing what he is loving really. It is merely a concept in the beginning. What is God? Who is God? Where is God? These are questions which arise in all of our minds, and if we are cynical we say, "How can there be a God with all this nonsense going on in this world of ours?" We become cynical, and that is an enemy of spirituality. My Master used to say, "It is not necessary to think of these things and ask a foolish question, 'Can there be a God when so many things are happening?'" He said, "Ask this question that, there being a God, why do these things happen?" Then the answer will be very obvious. **We** are the cause. It is we who have debased society. We have debased ourselves. We have brought degradation to this Earth. Nowadays everybody blames society, governments, for every evil that is existing, but it is we who are responsible.

If you'll permit, I'll tell you a beautiful story to pinpoint this, of a young man who wanted to be a disciple of a famous Master, and approached him with this request. The Master said, "Bring me the worst thing on Earth. Then I will accept you as my disciple." Now this young fellow went around looking for the worst thing on Earth. Several years passed and he was finding very bad things, and even worse things, but there was always something worse. Eventually, one day he was sitting in the toilet and suddenly he realised that his own excreta was the worst thing. Because his reasoning was that nobody wants to look at it, nobody tolerates its smell, nobody will touch it. This must be the worst thing. So he was going to take up some of it to take back to his Master when there came a voice from his excreta which said, "Yesterday evening I was apple tart and strudel and chocolate from Spring Leigh and all these things. You touched me and I have become this. Now you may judge who is the worst thing in creation. What is the worst thing in creation?" At that moment he had a moment of instant of awakening. He went empty-handed to his Master. His Master recognized him immediately and said, "My son, have you brought the worst thing that I wanted?" He fell at his feet prostrated and said, "Master, it is myself."

So you see, this is an ancient story but it is true even today, because however clean our outer environment is today... You in Europe know more than anybody else that trees are dying, forests are dying, fishes are dying, whales are dying, everything is dying. It is not untrue to feel that we are clinging on to a terrestrial existence which is becoming more and more insubstantial, more and more delicate, where the thread of existence can be cut by a mere puff. [blows]

So, when we build mighty edifices of steel and concrete and glass, and have the latest atomic reactors and the beautiful planes that are flying the skies today, perhaps in a sense we are trying to mislead ourselves. I make bold to say that it is a form of escapism. Every man who tries to surround himself with beauty is escaping from his inner ugliness. So, the conclusion is inevitable. Great masters don't have to say this; we all know this but we are afraid. This fear is the thing that we have to overcome.

I read a small 'Dennis the Menace' comic day before yesterday, where he is very dirty, filthy. His mother pulls him towards the bathtub and is undressing him, and he lets out a wail. He says, "Mommy, all this is dirty, but inside I am clean." Now, this affected me very deeply because that child, in its innocence, is still clean. How many of us can say the same thing, that, "Only this is dirty; I am clean inside."

So you see, we have to follow not the ascetic path — it is a stupid thing. My Master was against asceticism because the pendulum, instead of swinging this side, is swinging this side. He said India has always been the prey of two extremes. Either they became total materialists, corrupting religion, corrupting God himself, or they withdrew from the world totally and became entirely ascetic, recluses living in the jungles. He said both are wrong. We have to be like birds which fly with two wings, balancing the material existence with the spiritual existence.

I think this was his greatest teaching to a modern world, that there is really nothing wrong with the material existence provided we look to our inside existence, too. Balance both. Give equal attention to both, and then there is nothing wrong with this beautiful world. If you have inner beauty inside you will see outer beauty everywhere, because everyone knows that beauty is not in what we see but, as the poet said, "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder." One who has wealth inside sees wealth outside. One who is sick inside sees sickness outside. One who sees cruelty in God must be cruel himself.

So, Sahaj Marg does not preach the old tradition of running away from life, asceticism, things like that. On the contrary, it says that you are born into a material existence, you have to live a material existence; you cannot possibly avoid it. But remember the inner existence, too, because the outer is nothing but a reflection of the inner. That is why I told you the story of Dorian Gray, because we always need to look outside to see ourselves. When we speak, we look at other people to see their reaction. When a painter exhibits his paintings, he looks at the people who come to see it. What is their reaction? Even the greatest, because there is always this inner doubt about what we are, about what we have produced.

This is revealed in that famous story of Snow White. Her stepmother was looking into the looking glass every morning and asking the question, "Who is the fairest in this land?" Every morning the story says the mirror said, "You are fairest!" When I told this story to my Master he laughed. He said, "Why on earth had she to ask that mirror every morning the same question?" Because inside herself there was this doubt that she was not the fairest, and therefore she ran into tragedy, because one day the mirror said, "Snow White is the fairest." Then starts this beautiful hunt of a witch for a young child, seeking its destruction, which, if you can understand in a different way, is the destruction of innocence arising out of our own emphasis on ourselves.

The more we think about ourselves the less we think of others. When we think of nothing else but ourselves, we cannot think of anything outside us. This is the heartlessness and the cruelty that we see today. Not that human beings are innately cruel or heartless, because there are moments when you click them and all that human love and charity and compassion floods the environment. But it is the closing of all avenues of external contact by this total self-centredness — my power, my money, my this, my that.

My Master only says, "Forget the self." That is why I said, when I referred to the Delphic oracle, "Know thyself." I said this system goes a little beyond that, because knowing ourselves is useless. My Master said, "Become what you have to become." For this he said, "The Master is a mirror," because as we grow we see in the mirror, which is the Master, the reflection of ourselves. Therefore, we have the Dorian Gray picture now reversed. The picture becomes more and more beautiful, and ultimately it is so overpoweringly beautiful that we swoon at its feet and merge into it.

Broadly speaking, this is the message of the heart, the way of the heart. Go inside. Find the inner self. Learn to live with it. Learn to listen to the voice that you call conscience, which is coming out of it. Obey it fearlessly. Learn to give, in the true confidence that giving brings more and more for you to give, whereas keeping only sours the gift. Then we find this extraordinary miracle of any one of us perhaps becoming a saint, who receives and receives and receives unlimitedly, to go on giving, not retaining anything for himself, knowing that in that is his existence.

So, this is the way of the heart in a very simple way, because we don't want to be too late talking. We normally conclude with a meditation session of about twenty to thirty minutes. I invite all of you to sit for meditation and participate in it. All that we have to do is to sit comfortably, imagine that the heart is divinely illuminated from inside, and try to maintain that thought.

Thank you.

(Talk given at public meeting.)

III

NORTH AMERICA

24 July to 13 August, 1989

6

BOOK DEDICATION

Birch Bay, Washington, USA
24 July, 1989

The inscription says, "On this special occasion of our beloved Master's sixty-second birthday, July 24, 1989 at Birch Bay, Washington we present this first edition of *The Complete Works of Ram Chandra*, Volume I. We pray to Him that you may live long to further nurture the seeds that He has sown. With affection and remembrance of Babuji Maharaj, the North American Publishing Committee."

I am happy that we have this really beautiful volume. It is a fitting tribute to the Master. It is true that I had intended to publish this only on the occasion of the birth centenary of Babuji Maharaj. But there is a demand for the books and, as Babuji used to say, "For doing good we don't have to await the right time, and for doing the bad there is no right time."

So, for doing good work, we can do it at any time. That is also what I would like to clarify about meditation. Many people ask, "When shall we meditate?" Whenever you want to, whenever you have the time, remembering that we have the daily sadhana, the three steps: morning meditation, evening cleaning, night prayer-meditation. They must always be done, under all circumstances. There is no day on which you are free of those three aspects of sadhana. For the rest, whenever you have time you can meditate. But not more than one hour at a time, remembering again Babuji's often quoted maxim, "Enough is enough; anything more is too much."

So, I am very happy with the North American Publishing Committee and its activities. We have a parallel organization in France which is doing the French works, the French translations, and actually we have this Volume I of *The Complete Works* already in the French edition. I would offer you one advice that I offered them before, that while we always seek perfection, we don't wait until there is perfection to do the work because work is never perfect. This is one aspect of Sahaj Marg philosophy that I would like to impress upon you all, that this striving for perfection is what we do; the reaching of perfection is at his command, when he wishes to grace us with it.

In a sense, it is arrogant of a mere human being to think of perfection in the ultimate sense. Only God is perfect. Only His deeds are perfect. Only His work is perfect. So, true perfection in that sense can be achieved only when we are very near the goal and nearly divinised. Till then, of course, it does not mean that we do shoddy work or accept shoddy work. We are ever striving for perfection. Otherwise what happens, like it happens sometimes in other European countries, work is deferred until we have a perfect edition. It never happens. It's like a fruit. It starts off by being the bud of a flower, and then the flower, and then the seed comes, and whatever you have. There is a right moment at which to eat the fruit — a moment too soon, it is raw; a moment too late, it is over-ripe and probably getting rotten.

Perfection lies in catching the right moment. The right work at the right moment is an idea of perfection I would like you all to accept, understand, and perform. Work delayed — it may be perfect, but if it is too late it is no use. Why I emphasize this is, we are often very kind to the memories of the departed. We love them when they are no more with us. But we are not able to love them when they are here with us, and it is one of the tragedies of human life that love seems to flower in the absence of the beloved rather than in the presence of the beloved, even if it is the Master.

So, we should not keep the coffers of the heart closed until love can be perfected, its expression can be perfected. Like a fire — whether it is a matchstick or a forest fire, a fire is a fire, and you should let it burn. If that love is expressed in our work, you will find that it is perfect, because love makes all things perfect. This is an example of such work. It is a work of love, not so much of proofreading and computerization. Yes, they are all elements of the work that we do, but it is like cooking. You need salt and sugar and pepper and spoons and glasses and stuff, but if you don't put love into it, you may be able to eat it, but it is not necessarily edible.

Thank you.

7

REFLECTIONS ON THE NINE O'CLOCK PRAYER

Birch Bay, Washington, USA
25 July, 1989

"One thing which I like to introduce in our satsangh is that at 9:00 PM *sharp every abhyasi wherever he might happen to be at the time, should stop his work and meditate for fifteen minutes, thinking that all brothers and sisters are being filled up with love and devotion and that real faith is growing stronger in them. It shall be of immense value to them, which their practical experience only shall reveal."*

(Voice Real, *Combined Edition, p. 283)*

This is an old practice, this nine o'clock meditation at night. To tell you honestly I never heard about it till I printed *Voice Real*, in which it appears. That was some, I don't know, almost ten years after joining the Mission. And then I asked Babuji why he had not spoken about it to me or to others. He gave an indirect answer. The answer was that people don't do what I tell them to do for themselves; how are they going to do something for someone else? Because as you will all appreciate, our sadhana, which has these three or four *angas* (parts) we say — morning meditation, evening cleaning, night bedtime prayer, constant remembrance — these are strictly for ourselves, each one for himself. They are meant for personal spiritual growth and development and for the achievement of a very definitely personal and a very personally definite goal. It doesn't have anything to do with anybody else.

The nine o'clock prayer — meditation, whatever you call it — is a general one for welfare of others than ourselves. I think it introduces at a certain stage of our evolution, a concern for general well-being. Sometimes you have seen that if you are living in a good neighbourhood, and suddenly people start coming in, you feel the pressure of a different environment — maybe better, maybe less — we don't qualify it in the sense of attributing a quality to it. Similarly, a rich man, you know, living in a slum is always the target of attack. Therefore, people like to sort of get together — the herd instinct.

It is no less in spirituality. Though you must always remember that a light shines brightest when it is darkest. In spirituality we don't accept this nonsense of being together with your own sort of people so that you can have the company that you desire which will promote your welfare, which will promote your growth. That is strictly an Occidental way of thinking. Nevertheless, it is still a fact that unless everybody grows, you don't grow too much, in any case. It is not that you cannot grow because they don't grow; it is, perhaps, a limitation on your own growth that you don't think of others.

Even spirituality, even spiritual growth, even spiritual evolution could perhaps have this tinge of self-centredness if you don't think of others. I think it is in that context that we have to broaden our outlook and embrace all the abhyasis, brothers and sisters, eventually all the human beings, in one vast embrace of love: that it is not enough if I grow, you must grow, too. I draw your attention to Buddha's famous statement after he attained *mahaparinirvana*, as they call it, the highest level open to the Buddhists. He said, "I shall not leave this world till the last human being has been liberated." So, presumably, he is somewhere around. That is the sort of concern that we as human beings, evolved human beings — because we have hopefully reached a stage where we should have concern for others.

Perhaps at one stage Babuji thought it necessary not to talk about it. He did not stop it, there were people still doing it, but he stopped talking about it. I have never seen it in print except in *Voice Real*. Nor, I am sad to say, did I start doing it after I read it in *Voice Real*, because Babuji did not give me any specific instruction when I asked him, "Should I do it?" But I think we have now achieved a certain spiritual maturity when we should think of others apart from ourselves and include a prayer for general well-being of all. Therefore, I have thought it necessary to reintroduce it.

Please do it at nine PM local time. We don't have to calculate back and forth, what time is it in India now — it is local time. It doesn't matter, because it's a continuous beam of transmission of human love, human concern for others, human concern for the well-being of the others. So it is just to focus. If all the people in your country do it at one time, there is a certain cumulative effect which far exceeds the sum of the individual effects. So I request you to undertake this small concern for general well-being, understanding very well that it will surely contribute to your own added well-being. I think that is sufficient explanation for this.

Q: [inaudible]

PR: Oh, you just sit as if you are meditating and have this thought that, may devotion and love grow in the hearts of all.

Q: [inaudible]

PR: Ten, fifteen minutes, no more.

Q: [inaudible]

PR: Yes, you see, me, my people, and all people. There are always three stages. That is the problem of religion, that all religions — except, I should say, *sanatana dharma* — cover only their own following. At least that is what it would appear to a person like me. That unless you are a Christian, you cannot be emancipated through Christianity; unless you are a Buddhist, you cannot get through Buddhism. But in Hinduism there is no such limitation. Anybody can pray. Anybody can achieve. It is in doing something — the practice, you see — that is why it is called *tapasya. "Tapas Brahmavi Jignasahswah,"* says the old Upanishad. "Through tapas, one can get the experience of the Ultimate." So, that is open to all.

Prayer can be in different languages, but what is said through the different languages is always the same. When you say, "I am hungry," in English, or *"Je faime,"* in French, the meaning is the same. But how can prayer not be understood by the almighty Lord, who has no language, whose speech is silence? So, I don't accept this exclusive nature of religions — you see, it's almost like a club for the rich. The seven top nations of the world meeting in Paris. [chuckles] Today's top is tomorrow's bottom. We don't subscribe to that sort of politicalization of spiritual endeavours and motives and goals. Here we strive to broaden the base of spiritual existence further and further.

I remember Babuji wrote to Dr. Varadachari that he had reached such a high condition that even the insects in his house would qualify for liberation. Yes, I mean, if you live somewhere — if you light a candle, doesn't it illuminate the whole room? Weakly or strongly is not the question. You cannot say, "This candle shall burn only for me." The sun shines — I presume it is throughout the solar system that it is casting its light, throughout the universe, but elsewhere it is not so strong.

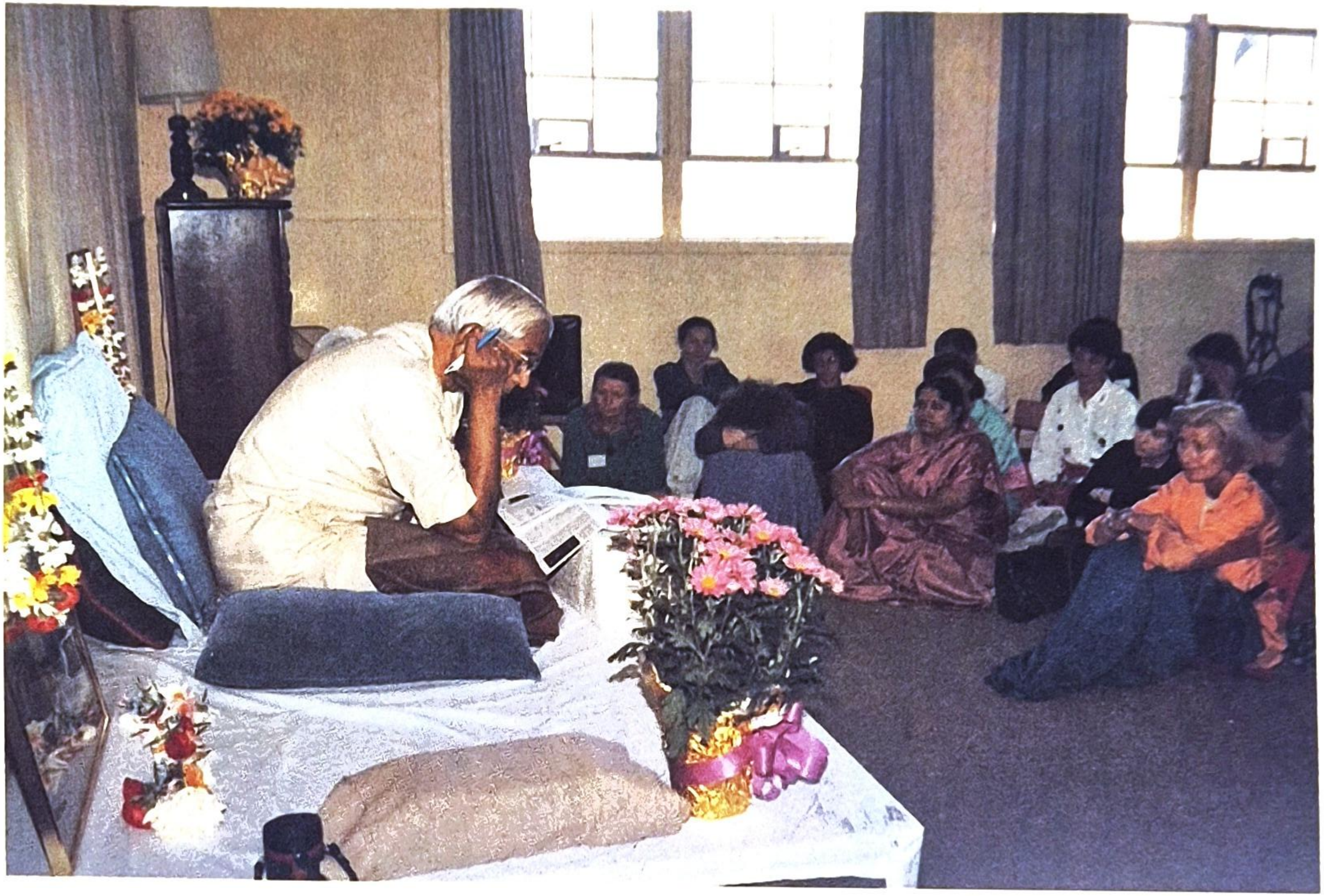
So when a spiritual man exists, Babuji has said that a saint is for the whole world, for the whole universe, if you are willing to accept. And one such saint is enough. He did not say for Hinduism or for Sahaj Marg — for the whole world. So, presumably it is his job to look to the needs of all the human beings in that world of his, or that universe of his. And why only human beings, why not plant life, insect life, mineral life, animal life?

So, that is his job. But when he tells us to do a certain thing and says, "At least look after the human beings," I think it is a duty to ourselves, that when we promote general welfare… It is like when the tide rises, the boat rises with it. Imagine a boat which would remain at a particular level and the tide is rising and the boat gets swamped — doesn't exist [chuckles]. So, we always float when everybody floats with us. When the general tide of spirituality rises, we must surely rise with it.

In this spirit, the doing to yourself by doing for others, is a very good exercise in a certain generosity, a certain breadth of vision, a certain urge to develop an embracing quality for your love. It is not enough to embrace one human being. So please try it. I am sure there will be a definite change in the moral tone of your environment. There will be a definite change in the possibilities of growth for all, and you will perceive it. It is not as if we don't see the spiritual growth. We all feel it, we see it in others, and why should we not see it in yet more people when we do this for them, and through them, for ourselves.

That is all I have to say about this nine o'clock endeavour. A day may come when we will be asked to pray in a very abstract way for all. "May all life in this universe benefit by His presence." We should be ready for that, too.

Thank you.



8

DON'T JUDGE

Birch Bay, Washington, USA
25 July, 1989

Don't judge yourselves. That's the problem. Just do and be. Let Him judge. I mean, if he is worth the salt that he is eating he is surely judging you, why should you also do it and suffer? Because often I find there is a total ignorance of what an inner condition really means. Now what she spoke about is a glaring example of this: that something good is happening and you are suffering for it. You know, it is like a man with stomach trouble and the doctor gives something, and he has to rush to the toilet every third minute. Purges his system out and he is suffering. "No, no, I never go to the toilet seventeen times a day! This is happening. Maybe the medicine is wrong." This is the conclusion. That's why I jokingly say, "Anything that appears to be bad during meditation is good for you." And when what you think is good is happening, it is perhaps a static condition of peace, tranquility, etc., which doesn't really mean much. It is like we work here and then we go and laze under the beautiful sun. Lions do it, lions do it all the time, but then let us be lions. Isn't it?

So, don't judge. Christianity says, "Judge not that ye be not judged." There it refers to judging others. I would prefer, “Do not judge yourself, so that others do not judge you.” Let Him judge. So let it be written, so let it be done.

9

CANADIAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

Birch Bay, Washington, USA
28 July, 1989

The Centre-in-charge has all of the authority that is delegated to him by the President. That is very clear. We are first and foremost a spiritual organization, and such rules and regulations that we have are meant to keep the organization moving in a healthy way, in conformity with the legal structure of the country in which we operate. Beyond that there is no problem. I don't see what is the problem.

Abhyasis are required to recognize the principles of the Mission, accept the maxims, and practise the system according to the directives given to them by the President and by the Master of the system, my Master. It is for their good, and I hope they accept it in that spirit.

As far as the secular functioning is concerned, we have to operate within the legal structure, stick to the rules, conform to societal requirements. There the Centre-in-charge is, in the absence of the President, the chief executive in his place. I think it is very clear. Like in India, we have the same picture. Centres-in-charge have dual functions, spiritual and temporal — what you call 'secular'. Everywhere it's the same. It has to be the same. I think I did say last year that sometimes I feel that perhaps there should be a distinction between these two, but my Master did not think so. I have discussed this with him. He said, "No. Secular capacities are easily acquired. Anybody can go through the necessary schools to achieve the techniques and the technical proficiency that he needs for managing an organization, but spiritual proficiency is not so easily acquired. Therefore I would prefer," (these are Babuji's words, you see) "I would prefer that the spiritual guide also exercises the regulatory control over the machinery that he is supervising and using for the abhyasis' benefit." Once we accept that this is for our benefit, then I do not see why there should be any dissension or confusion in the role of the centre-in-charge.

I may, of course, also say that the centre-in-charge, the President himself, all of the functionaries are expected to exercise what little — I would not say authority, because we really have no authority — what little regulatory mechanism we use, with discrimination, with love. There are no orders issued in this system. Everything is requests. Even when I tell you to meditate, I request that you meditate. If you choose not to, nobody can possibly compel you to meditate. You come here for your spiritual evolution, and if you say, "I will not accept the ten maxims. I will continue to be what I am in my secular existence, but you have to bring me up," I have also the, shall we say, corresponding right to tell you that, unless you conform to these sets of regulations, your spiritual evolution is impossible. It is not a question of my not accepting you. It is the question of the system not being able to work unless it is adopted in its fullness, in its totality.

It is like one man saying, "I am a free individual, I will drive the car on the left side. Who are you to tell me to drive on the right?" You would not exist very long. Or going through Customs and saying, "These are my things. I bought them. Who are you to open them?" And you know what happens. You probably land in jail. But there, it is an official machinery with official powers granted by the government.

Here we have no government. We are trying to instill in you, create in you, the capacity to govern yourselves, and thereby to evolve.

So, we are an advisory body. As far as the individual's life is concerned, we advise. Do this, do not do that. It is advice. There are no orders. There are no restrictions. There are no do's and don'ts. There are suggestions. If you do this, your evolution will be faster. If you do not, then do not gripe when you do not progress so fast or do not progress at all.

So, abhyasis are requested to understand that here we function for your benefit. The Mission exists only to help people. Otherwise it has no existence. What is the need for it to exist? I have told Babuji Maharaj, my Master, "Why are you killing yourself like this? Close the whole thing and go home." He had made what he had to make in the spiritual life. There was no need for him, at the age of seventy-eight, to wander around the face of the globe, eating strange food, being sneered at by some, hypocritically loved by others, imperfectly understood, or not at all understood, not at all accepted by most. What was the need for him to do it? You see, it was his love for humanity, his promise to his Master, that kept his nose to the grinding wheel all his life.

It is a sacrifice he made for us, which we should, in our turn, as a sort of expression of gratitude to him, try to emulate. We should also try to sacrifice our existence for the existence of others. Now, if preceptors make this sacrifice of their time, of their places, invite people, give them sittings, be kind to them, sympathetic with them, you will find that there is a great deal of loving harmony being established. Then the legal structure and the machinery that is used to make this practice available to aspirants everywhere becomes like a vehicle which we use to go across from some place to some other place.

So, we should remember that the Mission is a vehicle. The functionaries are like the drivers and the engineers and the maintenance men. They have to do their work. Now you cannot go into the pilot's cockpit in a plane and say, "Why are you turning left? Turn right. I know this route." He will say to you, "No, I also have a flight controller on the ground who keeps telling me the route that I have to follow. I have a flight plan which I have to obey. It is not a visual approach with something, it is an instrument landing system, I.L.S. So please, would you mind going back to your seat and fastening your seatbelt?" This is very much like that. After all, if you fly, you accept even what an air hostess says. She says, "Excuse me, do not move around now because we are serving lunch." You go and quietly, docilely, sit in your seat. You may be able to employ one million girls like her. You have all that money. But there it does not work.

So you see, do not confuse your authoritarian positions, whatever they are in the outer world, with your role and position in the Mission. Very often this confusion comes, that a big business fellow comes, makes a lot of money, and wants to throw his weight around within the Mission. Or somebody is a big government official and he wants to throw his weight around in the Mission. These are two different things. A fish swims much better in water than a human being can ever swim. But if the president of the United States dives into the ocean, then says, "Hey, you. Come here," the whale is not going to obey him, or even the tiniest fish.

We are in different elements. Here, you are in a different element altogether. This is a different sort of hierarchy. It is a different world, as you have experienced many times after a sitting. Judith is saying after every sitting that she does not even remember what she has to announce. So, if we are to retain that spiritual state, we have to forget progressively what we are, who we are, where we are, even why we are. Why on earth are we here? We do not know.

But after we become spiritual and we experience these highly subtle spiritual existential states, we now wonder why we are here. We do not now **question** any more why we are here; we **wonder** why we are here. There is a big difference. First, we do not know why we are here. We are bewildered like children. "What am I doing here? Why am I here? I did not want to be born." You know, all these futile and rather weak cries of the human being. Later on, we wonder what we are doing here. "This is not where I belong." But if you confuse that with, "Yes, I do belong here. I drive a Cadillac and I am a big boss in my organization. You may be the board of directors, you guys, of a tiny business, I mean, tiny Mission like this. But, you know, I run a bigger show than you," then you are reverting back to the world of the temporal, of the futile, and you lose this that you have gained here. You may get whatever you get outside.

I always like to quote the famous Christian example, or statement, when the devil tempted Christ: "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?" Here we are trying to build the soul into something which is approaching divinity itself. There we are trying to build our houses and our properties and our power and our position. The two are not at all reconcilable. Please accept this.

You have a right to live there and to exist here and try to build this up, sometimes even sacrificing that. But most people imagine that this is easily sacrificed, that is more necessary. In this lies the confusion, the mixing up of the role of the preceptor-in-charge, the role of the board of directors, because you are confusing a merely temporal organization, like a company or a governmental organization, with a spiritual organization which is a service organization. The roles may appear to be the same. There is a manager there, there is a manager here. But they do not manage the same things. There is a director there, there is a director here. But they are not the same. What do we manage here? We manage nothing; we manage a few dollars. You know how much money we make in a whole year. You all get accounts copies. It would be childish for our Mission to even think that we are a business organization. We buy a few things. We sell a few books. We run a cafeteria where we turn a profit of probably $1.77 after a week. [laughter; he chuckles]

So, what on earth are we thinking that we are managing? There is really nothing to manage. It is just like putting together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle so that it makes some sense. We need places to stay in, we need toilets to be used in the morning, we need food — basic three things. Even beds and things like that, we can do without. Food, toilet, and meditation — three essentials of existence. [laughter; he chuckles] Yes, because food is necessary, without that you cannot live. Without a toilet you can no more exist today. And meditation is the prime purpose for which the other two are necessary.

To provide these facilities, we need a number of people. This is an organization. What is an organization but a number of people? To regulate their activity you need somebody who looks after them, who gives them periodic guidance. Do not do it this way, do it this way. You know, like you train a child: If you turn the tap this way you get water, if you turn it this way it gets tighter and tighter.

So, there is no organization. There is only a guidance system. The whole thing is a guidance system. Where to buy books? Go there. From whom? From the person behind. At what price? It is put on the books. It is a guidance system. Like in modern major airports you find everywhere arrows, and you follow the arrow and you go to where you want to go. If you do not, well you may get stuck somewhere because you cannot open doors any more today. Somebody else has to come and open your door.

Here, it has been so from the beginning — that it is a door-less mansion, yet we are trying to open doors which for us are very real because we are trying to open them. When you are trying to open doors which do not exist, you are creating the door which you are trying to open, which has no key, because the door itself does not exist, and you go around like the cat which is chasing its own tail.

So, in spirituality problems do not exist. Such problems as are existing are created by us, and since we have created them, we have to solve them. This is Master's fundamental, axiomatic truth: that you have created it. Throw it away. Let His creation come into being.

All this confusion, all this dance of power, dance of position — we should throw it aside. Adopt simplicity. Adopt humility. Adopt love. Guide instead of order and propel, "No, no, go this way." If you give a man a push from behind and push him towards the toilet, he may very well fall there on his nose. We accept service which is given with love, knowing that such service is not binding us in any way, or demeaning us in any way. One who gives service offers it with humility, knowing that he serves without being a servant. I do not think there is any need to expatiate upon the roles and responsibilities and duties.

We must also remember that such duties as we have to perform are accepted by us as volunteers. There is no imposition of duty here on anybody; even preceptors we do not impose upon. If you attend the preceptors meetings, you will often see the Master is sitting there pleading with them, "Why don't you give two sittings today instead of half?" Because it is possible to give one-tenth of a sitting and imagine you have given a full sitting. It is like, "I gave him bread," when all that you gave was a slice. So the giver often satisfies his or her ego or sense of charity by giving a bit and magnifying it into the whole. "I gave him a sitting today." "How long was it?" "Oh, I guess it was seven minutes." "Why?" "Because Babuji gave a sitting for forty-five seconds to you in Copenhagen airport. So this is about fifteen times that." But it is not fifteen times Babuji's sitting. If you could do that, you would have created masters.

So, let us stick to the guidelines given. Sittings must be half an hour, twenty minutes out of which must be for cleaning. All this, what you call regulations, somebody calls rules, somebody calls regimentation, and another says, "What a wonderful system." So, depending on what is your point of view, you create the vocabulary for description. Then we fall into the traps of those descriptions. "Oh, they have rules and regulations, you see, ten maxims." "Why not twelve?", somebody says. "Why not six?", another says. "Why maxims at all?", third man says.

We have this unfortunate confusion between freedom and liberty. We are free but we have no liberties. In what sense are we free? As Babuji said, "We have the freedom to do what is right; nobody can ever stop us from doing that." That is the only true freedom. That is also the freedom that functionaries of this Mission enjoy. To do what is right.

Now, when we think that we have the freedom to do what we like, then the freedom is likely to be cut, because this is not an organization where, really speaking, we have to go through any proper channels. There is divinity which is working here, and it can cut off anything from anywhere at any time. Temporal organizations, secular organizations, may have to adopt motions, have them proposed, have them seconded, have them approved. Divinity does not know such procedures.

Here, we have an intermingling of the spiritual and the temporal, the secular with the divine. And we have to remember that, like we live through life working through our bodies, not vice versa. When a man eats like a pig, three pizzas, and says, "Oh, but I have got to live, Chari," he is killing himself. He is not living, he is killing himself.

So you see, you must allow the divine guidance to flow through you in everything that you do, which is the real guidance, which is the real guide. God is the real guide, working through preceptors, this, that, and the other. If we have this meekness, the simplicity to accept that, yes, these people are functioning for our benefit, they are doing or saying what they are saying for our benefit, let us follow it and see, then everything falls into place.

So, all that I have to request you all, whether you are directors of the board or whatever you are — we are all abhyasis, essentially we are abhyasis trying to go from here to there. Even a pilot in the cockpit does not make the mistake of thinking he is a pilot. He also gets home that night only if his plane lands safely. His life is as much involved in that plane's existence as the passengers. He cannot come out and say, "Oh, it doesn't matter a darn to me. I am just the pilot." He cannot say it, because he will probably die first if the plane nosedives. Here also that possibility is there, that when we have a flock which is entrusted to us by the Master, it is like a shepherd who has lost some sheep — he has to go back out again and look for the lost sheep. He cannot come back and eat his dinner until the lost sheep have been found. I have given you this example last year. If a shepherd goes out with a hundred sheep and comes back with ninety-nine, he cannot say, "Boss, I have ninety-nine percent success. Only one sheep is lost." The boss will say, "It is for that sheep I have employed you. The ninety-nine that are here are mine. That also is mine. Go and bring it."

So you see, the preceptors have to really kill themselves. Anyone, any preceptor who is true to his salt, must be willing to accept this responsibility. That accountability is there, that the Master can say, "What have you done to this abhyasi?" The need for morality, the need for etiquette, the need for proper behaviour in preceptors is much more demanding than an abhyasi's. Sometimes we feel that inhuman demands are being made on preceptors. Yes, precisely, because they are trying to be inhuman, or we should use the better word, transcendental humans.

When we are trying to transcend the merely human existence to become something divine, is the Master not right in expecting us to be something more than human in our approach to others, in his demanding more from us by way of self-control, obedience, self-regulation? They appear inhuman precisely because they are designed for a higher life than the merely human. But we do not want it. We want the freedom, or the apparent freedom, of the human being and we are willing to sacrifice the spiritual values of life to which we are aspiring. So, on one side we are tied down by a very strong bond to this very gross existence, on the other we are trying to flutter about with very delicate angel's wings. Which wins? You will know. It is almost inevitable that this bondage wins.

So you see, when we are aspiring to be something much more than human, much more than even saintly, go on and on to the divinised state, we can have no more truck with human laws, human needs, human responses. We have to be prepared to soar. All of you have surely read that beautiful little book, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. It is a difficult thing, but unless you are able to face it, dive again and again, crash into the surface of the sea, break your wings, nothing is possible.

If you are only wishing to be docile and have your fun in the great American tradition, nobody says no to that. But remember, you will be chained to that wheel of fun until from there again some benevolent soul will come and remove the shackles of gold and diamonds, and let you free from your cars and your women and your drugs. It is a bondage. It is a chain. You see it in people living around here. They are doing the same things over and over again, and they think they are happy, that they are enjoying life. Poke them in the ribs and say, "John or Henry, or what have you, what the bloody hell are you doing?" He cannot answer, "Oh, I am having fun." "Where is the fun? You are getting sicker and sicker, you are getting fatter and fatter. More and more aid, more and more fun to give you AIDS? Where are you heading?" "Oh, but it's fun, you know. You guys from India, you don't know how to enjoy life." Very well, the good old American way, it is yours. It has always been yours, but it is a prison. A prison with bars of gold, with beautiful mattresses, waterbeds inside, *houris*, what you want, you know, but a big prison. Now if you want to get out of that, you have got to leave everything behind.

So there comes the question, you know, one tiny door is open and the Master says, "Get out quick." "No, no, let me take my mattress and my most beautiful girlfriend and my water heater and my portable winemaker." [laughter] It's not possible. It is not at all possible.

So, all these things, all these apparently regulatory instructions, apparently tight rules of behaviour, etiquette, it is because you have to escape through such a narrow door from this stupid world into that glorious freedom from immortality. Have you seen a submarine escape through a hole? If you are a little fatter than you should be, you cannot come out. They will have to probably cut you into pieces and re-assemble you. It is for that. It is very much like a child which is born. It is so small precisely because it has to come out of the mother through a very, very, very inescapable route.

Today you read of all the psychologists saying birth traumas originate with the delivery, with the birth of the child. I am amazed at what all stupidities the Western mind can conjure up. They attribute a whole school of psychology to this nonsense, that the child is being compressed through a very narrow path, and therefore, all that traumatic bondage through the birth canal. You know, they use grandiose terms, hyphenated words which look very scientific. Then we have a whole new school of psychology, and people go and pay a hundred dollars, two hundred dollars a week to be analyzed or to be, I don't know, executed. What is this nonsense!

An escape route has to be small. Nobody is going to open a door sixty feet wide for an escaping criminal. You have heard of prisoners tunneling under the earth from the prisoner of war camps. They could not make six foot wide tunnels where you could walk erect. You could barely squeeze through them. This is also such a thing, but here there is the Master going behind you, going ahead of you, pulling you, pushing you, cajoling you. This we have to accept. Otherwise, if you are afraid to go through that escape route, stay where you are. Nice rooms, I mean, American prisons must surely be good, I don't know. I don't wish to see one, but [chuckles] modern prisons people say are very comfortable. They are heated, you have hot and cold water, no more the hole in the floor. So, it can become an enticement. You say, "Well, you know, I am living in one of those mobile homes. This is much better, Chari, immobile homes."

So, please don't make this mistake of thinking that we are being governed here. We are being liberated here. Don't make the mistake of thinking that you are being forced here. Again, you are being released here, not forced. There is no governing, there is no forcing. There is only release, there is only liberation. In this process, to help you, to guide you, there are some maxims, etc., which you are requested to accept from those whom the Master, in his wisdom, thought fit to guide you. This is eventually, and essentially, this is the only role any one of us plays, that we are guides. The Centre-in-charge has to accept responsibility for a big set-up. He must have the freedom to run it as he wishes, or as he thinks right, being supervised by his boss, whoever he may be.

Now, the way a father runs a family, the children normally are not expected to criticize, because they are the beneficiaries of his efforts. He can be regulated by his father if he is still alive, "What are you doing?" Yes, he has to obey because he is papa. So you see, there is always a one-way descent of what you call authority and powers and regulatory mechanisms. It doesn't go back. You receive this. What can go back and create a parallel stream which can give you the greatest merit, blessings and beatitude, is an upward flow of love.

If you learn to love Him who is guiding you, then everything that He does for you will appear as rose petals. If that love is lacking, everything appears like rules and regulations. Then people come and say, "Oh, I had this in Christianity. There also they have prayer." Yes. It is like saying in Hindu, "A Hindu also has bodies, or a Chinaman also has legs." Of course! What else do you expect?

So, in this brief, or rather, un-brief [laughter] talk, I have tried to give you the philosophy of what we are trying to do and I request you to co-operate for your benefit, for your growth; promising from our side all that we can possibly do for you with the Master's grace, with his permission.

Thank you.

10

DESERVINGNESS

Birch Bay, Washington, USA
28 July, 1989

Instead of beating around the bush on how we should do the preceptors' work, I would prefer that we just do it. I say this because I have found by so many talks I had with Babuji, and my own experience, that we learn only by doing. All the books in the world cannot teach us something which we have to learn only by doing. So, rightly or wrongly, let us do, in the faith that He cannot do wrong. That is number one.

Number two: about the number of sittings. Of course, it should tire us, there is no question about that, if you do the cleaning. But the number of sittings each person can give depends upon availability of time, and the strength that we bring to the job. As I have said somewhere, I used to give twenty-four, twenty-five sittings a day in Babuji's time. I do not think my work was bad. At the same time I used to feel tired, I used to feel exhausted. There were days when I could not sleep because I was too tired to sleep, which most people will not understand. My eyes used to burn, my body was in total agony, but I went on with the job because it had to be done. So, we have not to be worried about what happens to us.

As I said this morning, it is a sacrifice we have to make of our time and of ourselves.

The third thing is, not to worry about results. Because I find most people do not work because they are afraid of results. Will I be able to do it? Well, until you do it, how do you know? So, keep going until you get results, in the faith that, after all, it is the Master's work. He is doing it, and so how could it fail? When we have this doubt that what we are doing may not work, it means we have lack of faith not only in ourselves, but in the Master, which is deplorable.

Then, maybe I should make a comment about this deservingness business. This morning there were some questions about it. I think we need to feel that we deserve what we are getting for two reasons. One is, of course, the ego. There is always a reluctance to receive charity or gifts. Especially in the West you return every gift with another gift. But it would be very crude in the East, because there we are trained to accept with grace another person's love which, after all, is why somebody gives a gift. If you return a gift it is like a slap in the face. It is as if you are returning the love. Returning love by loving in return is different from returning the love by returning the package. That is why so many people feel rejected, ignored. But the inner psychic tendency continues, you see, that we need to feel deserving, because then, in some way, we have earned what we are getting. So it is primarily [chuckles] a problem of the ego.

I am always accused of being arrogant and egotistic, and I have no doubt I am both, but I have never bothered about whether I deserved what I got. For me it was the Master giving and I receiving, and I was only too happy to receive it. I have also spoken about 'deserve and then desire'. That is an attitude we are expected to create, you see, that we should be deserving. It is an act of humility. So, the same deservingness, instead of pampering our egos and saying, "Yeah, you have done a great thing, you know, you deserve it." That which is serving as an ego booster should be in some way be invertendoed — turned upside down like the hourglass, the sandglass of time — and made to promote our humility.

So, the deservingness is not in some material deservingness, or physical deservingness, but in order to create in us a humility which will say, "Yes," you know, make us wonder, "Do I deserve this?" It should be an act of wonder rather than one of self-justification or self-patting on the back. So, when we think of deservingness in one way, it reflects our ego; in the other way it reflects the lack of the ego. You have to learn to differentiate between the manifestations of deservingness in these two ways.

The second is, whenever we receive and there is a giver and we feel we deserve it, it is in a very spiritual way an isolation from the giver, you see, a cutting off from the giver. It brings into existence a duality where perhaps there need be none. Like Babuji always said, if you feel that the Mission is yours and the Master is yours, and I have given you the example of a small child which owns everything its father owns. It does not say, "My father's car" or "My father's house." It says, "My house." You see that state of innocence, where though physically we are separate, where our lives are separate, yet in our consciousness we are one, there is no more the one giver and the receiver. Where is the question then of deservingness?

So you see, we have to look upon deservingness with great wisdom, and understand that what Babuji means when he says, "Be deserving and then desire," is not to be deserving in an arrogant way, you see, that, "Yes, I have also been doing this for fifteen years. What have I got from you? Don't you think I am deserving?" That is clearly a manifestation of the ego. But to make ourselves deserving in the sense that we are empty pots, empty vessels, and waiting to receive; it is a sign of humility.

It is this sort of deservingness that we should strive to promote in the abhyasis who are coming to us for help. Unless you understand the difference, you cannot possibly make them understand the difference. Of course, the other aspect of isolation from the Master, separation in our thoughts, in our consciousness, that He gives and I receive, this I never had. I tell you very bluntly, I have received so much, but I have never felt that I have received so much. In fact, the example I gave you when Babuji asked me, "Are you doing the cleaning?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, who do you think you are?" You know, the equivalent of that. "Do you think you are the Lord Saheb that you do not do it?" I said, "I never felt dirty. Why should I do it?" Which is true, I never felt dirty, too.

Now, being dirty and feeling dirty, they are two different things. Being dirty is an external thing. I walk on the streets, surely my feet are a little unclean. I walk in the rain, I am a little dirty. There is all this acid rain from above, the mire from below. But I do not feel dirty. I am dirty, I am unclean; but I do not feel dirty. I have just to stand under the shower, or wash my face, or wash my feet and I am okay. But when we feel that we are dirty it is an inner feeling — it is very potent in its possibility to create harm.

That is why in Augerans I emphasized (I think it was in possibly the first day's talk) that we think too much of grossness. It is a negative tendency, and what it leads to is that we begin to meditate on grossness. I gave you the example last year what Babuji was doing. He was quite upset and confused that he had been working for so many years and people were getting grosser and grosser. Then he discovered that people were meditating on grossness. So, we give too much attention to the negative things. It was always upsetting when people used to come and say, "Please clean me thoroughly." What on earth for? It is not your business to think of your grossness.

Similarly, when you think you are deserving in some way — a humble man does not think he is undeserving. He goes on becoming more deserving. It is something like that Shakespeare quotation I am very fond if. "It is not that I love Caesar less, but that I love Rome more." Now, if you figure it out in the way of the English language, it is absurd. If you love something more, you must love something less. But in spirituality there is no less and there is no more, you see. There is only growing. So, we grow in deservingness. It is not that our previous state was one of undeservingness. Nothing existed before.

So, do not anguish yourselves by saying, "Oh, I do not deserve this love, I do not deserve even his glance, I do not deserve even this little letter from him." All this is crazy. You would not get anything unless you deserved it. The Master is not a fool to give you something had you not already been deserving. So, whatever you got, whether you are deserving or not, do not worry about it. It is good enough that He thought you were deserving, or perhaps even undeserving, and yet He gave it to you. What difference does it make? Except, as I said, to the ego — that we feel we are deserving and we owe the old man nothing, because, "After all, I am deserving, therefore he gave it to me."

It is a big trap. This deservingness is a big trap, potentially. Unless you understand this idea of deservingness, the need to be deserving, in the right way, it can lead to situations like the one that our sister has been facing: conflicts, guilt complex. I did nothing and yet I got so much. Yes, be happy! Why be sorry about it? I would be immensely happy if I got more without being deserving. I mean, I have got everything that I have without really being deserving, except that he thought I was deserving. Now if I put myself or my judgement against his and say, "Well, he thought I was deserving but, you know, I feel I do not deserve," it is worse.

It is like the sin complex in Christianity. Flailing yourself, taking the hair brush, you know, the hair shirt, beating your breast, wailing in front of the wall which some religions adore — the Wailing Wall. What on earth for? I do not think my Master made me to wail and beat my breasts. He made me to be happy, to be cheerful, to be content. Now, content means content under all circumstances. If I get something I am content, if I do not get anything I am still content. Cheerful under all circumstances. We cannot determine, you know, that the circumstances must be right for me to be cheerful or happy. When we are able to achieve these things, the deserving now becomes, as I said, an aspect of humility, not one of self-judgement.

I will also repeat today what I said in Augerans: Judge not that ye be not judged. I think this primarily refers to the self. "Do not judge yourself. I am there to judge," the Lord says. Like, "Revenge is mine, sayeth the Lord." I would say, "Judgement is mine, sayeth the Lord." How are we qualified to judge ourselves with our puny little minds and intellects, and our mucked up emotions? We have just to be there, you see, like children. You give a child a cookie, he is happy; you give him a candy, he is happy; you give ice cream, he is happy; you bring him a large present, he is immensely happy. He does not say, "But Dad, do I deserve this?" I mean, dad would be astounded at such an impudent question! He says, "When I give, is it not enough that you receive? Do you seek to put my generosity towards you on the scale and weigh it against your stupid ideas of ability to receive?"

Please avoid this trap of judging yourselves. That we have to be receptive to receive — yes. If you are blind, you cannot receive a gift of a book. Open your eyes. If you are deaf, you cannot listen to music which he may give as a disc. Open your ears. If he gives you love and if your heart is blind to it, you cannot receive it. **Open your heart.**

We have to be open in everything that we do. Open every channel that is available to you. Not selector — one by one, one by one — this is not cable TV, that you spend half the evening selecting the channel. Here, we do not select. We keep all channels open because we do not know on which channel he is going to communicate. Then all these funny ideas of, "Do I deserve to be here? Is what I am doing good?", all this will disappear.

Preceptors should not have these fantasies. Preceptors should work, work, and work. And to help you in that the Master is there. Whether he needs us or not, you know, this is again a matter of ego. "Oh, he needs me, Chari. He cannot get on without me." If somebody says, it is again ego. Of course he needs us, otherwise why would he have us here? In another dimension he may not need us, you see. Like we need the body. For how long? Until we have our spiritual goal achieved. After that, what is the use of this body? So we leave it. But when we are still in it, it means we still need it. So we do not pamper it and, you know, polish it and burnish it. We just keep it and use it.

It is like a tool. Many people I know buy expensive tools but do not use them because they might get blunt. But then it should not be an expensive tool if it gets blunt when you use it. A good tool should get sharper and sharper as you use it more and more. In fact, it is the unused tool which has to be oiled and put away safely. We do not want to be oiled and put away safely. We want to be used, and in being used we become brighter and brighter. All our faculties become keener and keener. You know, they used to say, a keen blade — not sharp; sharp is a physical expression — keen. We want keenness of mind, keenness of intellect, keenness in our love. It must be like a laser beam which can penetrate into even the most tightly closed hearts.

You know, I told Don it took me four days to open some of you here. Because unfortunately, the heart being yours, as long as you think it is yours, you have the ability to close it. Even if he puts a stopper on it, and in such a fashion that the largest or the wildest storm cannot shut it, you can shut it, because that is the liberty that is given to the human individual. So we find this, that we take time to open and we find it is immediately shut. Open and again it is shut. Sometimes it takes all one's life.

It was not a joke, you know, when I told you what happened instantly in the very first sitting in Germany, in Denmark, two places, very definitely. It was because they were ready. They were waiting with hearts open. It was not something the Master gives. It is something that they draw.

Now here lies the secret of deservingness, you see, that you are deserving in the right sense of preparedness to receive, which is the only deservingness here. It is not a human qualifiable deservingness here. It is not a human qualifiable deservingness, that one has studied so therefore one deserves this job. Not like that. It is like the rain. It is always falling. If the pot is outside and it is empty, it is filled up. If it is already full, well, it just remains full with whatever is in it.

So you see, we have to allow him to open the heart, and keep it open after that. But we are afraid. What else may enter with him? Well, the entire universe will enter with him. It includes the immense ghosts, all the fairies that you can ever think of. It is his entourage, you know; how can you obstruct it? Wherever I go there are abhyasis going with me. It is inevitable. And if I say, "Only I will come," it would not be possible for me to do it because there are people who will never leave me, and you have to put up with them if you want me. It is like the sun. If you want its light you have to get its heat. And we spend all our lives devising polyester films which will let through the light but not the heat, or vice versa.

The human ingenuity is always trying to separate things into desirable and undesirable elements. Nature did not do it. Nature provides, but at the same time it provides within us a system, which without knowing will filter out the undesirable and retain the desirable. That is what digestion is about, that is what the pulmonary cycle is about, that is why we breathe and we can take in the oxygen and throw out the carbon dioxide. Now, if some stupid fellow were to say, "I shall breathe only oxygen," he would not breathe very long because it is corrosive.

So you see, let us leave it to benevolent Nature, in the grand and only faith that my Master is there to look after me always, in illness as much as in health. If he was not looking after me in health I could not remain healthy. It is a travesty of the fact to think that we are healthy, but sickness comes and then his help is necessary. We are again fragmenting his existence. It is like a telephone call I have to make to the doctor. The Master is at my beck and call to come when I need him, or when I think I need him, whereas his presence should be permanent, eternal with us.

So you see, we forget him when we are happy, when we have good jobs, when money is going well, when our love affairs are going nicely. But at the first sign of trouble in these areas, we shout. Then he says, "But I have been all along with you. If you did not feel my presence it is your fault." You ask, "No, then why did this happen to me?" He answers, "Because you thought you were not with me. It is you who isolated yourself and suffered." It is like a child which crawls away from the mother and then shouts and weeps, looking for its mother who is sitting just behind it.

So you see, preceptors must understand the system thoroughly, must build in themselves the faith. We do feel the Master's presence in a special way on certain occasions, but I feel very upset when for every small thing we say, "Oh, the Master was present today." Where was he yesterday? Where is he going to be tomorrow? He is there all the time. As I gave an analogy, it is like the wind, or the air if you choose to call it so. It is always there. The only thing is, it achieved a momentum which you did not see in it before. Sometimes it is so still that you can hardly breathe, and you say, "Oh, there is not even the tiniest breeze," but it is there, otherwise you would not breathe.

The fact of our breathing is the fact that there is air around us which we can breathe. It is not in movement, and so we do not perceive it as a breeze. Similarly, the Master is always there. Sometimes he moves in a different way, or I would prefer to say he moves us in a particular way, which makes us shout with joy and say, "Today I felt his presence." It is we who move, not he who moves. He moves us, you know, like in engineering you have the concept of the prime mover. There is the ultimate prime mover.

So please, all of you, especially those who are in circumstances of anguish, feeling sorry for yourselves, or feeling neglected, or feeling I do not know what, when you tend to put your head between your two hands and weep your heart out, remember that He is there, and all these tears are a waste. Now, if you are weeping with love it is good. Then it is a rejuvenating fountain, you see, but if you are weeping in misery and sorrow and anguish and separation, then you are draining the batteries of your existence.

So, sorrow and misery have no place in our lives. We cannot afford to waste our inner energies like that. Love charges batteries, yours and the other's, because it is hooked on to a generator. But all negative tendencies drain us, and ultimately, if they come to the point where they are draining the bottom-most layer of you where the faith should be, then when that faith goes we have nothing left to hang on to.

Please remember that we do feel his presence occasionally, but that is not an indication of his earlier absence, it is only a confirmation of his presence. Why did I not feel it? Because in some way it was imperceptible, but he was with us, because he always is. I must be deserving in the right sense of humility, which means that I must wonder why this man is giving me so much, and not be arrogant about the fact that he has given me so much.

These are small things, but I think vital to understand, and I am glad that certain situations are exposing these needs so that I can speak about them and sort of, you know, fill up the holes in the walls so that everything is nice. Now I would like to give you all a sitting.

(Talk given at preceptors' meeting)

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SPIRITUALITY: THE PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE

Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

30 July, 1989

Many things to say. I do not know what you would like to listen to. I have the art of rubbing people the wrong way. But as I advance in age and in spirituality, I feel I have to tolerate more and more of what I have to see, and, you know, sort of evoke co-operation.

What I told Don, about needing fourteen sittings before I had the right atmosphere established, was something confidential and he, I mean, he cannot keep secrets! [laughter] But I think it is good that you should know it. I think the main deterrent to spiritual progress in North America is not the wealth and the opulence and the sex and the drugs. All that can be washed away in one moment. It is the too casual attitude to spirituality. I mean, people come to our seminars as if they are obliging either me or Babuji, or somebody else. They expect to be thanked for coming. I am perfectly willing to thank you all for coming, not once but twenty times.

Here, you know, work is some sort of a god. I can understand the dollar being the god, but it seems to me now that it is not so much the dollar but the work that has become the god. You are all workaholics. Yesterday somebody told me, "I am retired and I have nothing better to do, so I am travelling around the world." But I can assure you I have a heck of a lot to do at home which I am neglecting to come here. Heck of a lot. You would not even begin to imagine what I have to do at home. When I say home, I do not mean to my personal home, I mean my country, my people.

But I have to come because he has given me the job and I am not worried so much. Excuse me for saying this, I am not so much worried about your progress as what I am going to tell him, you see, when he asks me, "What is going on in North America? You are going there and eating pizza and travelling in Mercedes 460 CESLs, visiting planetariums. What has happened to my people?" It is of that I am afraid, because I feel very often that my credit rating is going down with my boss.

Sometimes I am wondering, you know, whether it is my fault. Very often I worry whether it is your fault. Both, perhaps. Whether I should come so frequently because, you know, there is a danger in too much of, well, it is not closeness that one is afraid of, it is promiscuity in a different sense. When I am there, hanging around all the time and available to everybody, listening to every darn thing that is said, a shoulder available for everybody to weep upon, a back to be kicked by everybody who wishes to kick, there is a certain denigration of the position that the Master should occupy. And this is a danger to you. For me, I do not care. I am a football, you can kick me around wherever you like. My goalpost is there. But I am worried about you people. Whether you have learned to blend familiarity with respect, availability with usage, custom with adaptability, extravagance with prudence.

Spirituality is, by and large, very essentially a bringing together of opposites. If this American flippancy of attitude is going to prevail, not just as a superficial veneer to get rid of your embarrassment, like when you start talking and say, "Oh, hi, ha, hum," and all these things, then it is a danger to your growth.

Now, I do not know how far this veneer is inside — whether it reflects the American character, whether it is just a superficial veneer, whether it is just a put on, whether it is really hiding an embarrassment, or it has become so much part of your character that nobody is able to penetrate inside and see what a great American heart is holding.

So, these are dangers, again I repeat, for you. For me there are no dangers. I come. I go. If you want me, I come. America is not my country, you see. In a sense it is my country; in another sense it is not mine. I must go where I am needed. But you know, it is like a sales job: we have two functions. We cannot neglect the market which is doing extremely well, nor can we neglect the market in which there is no response. How to balance our approach to these two extreme situations? You cannot say, "Well, you know, that is doing well. Leave it for two or three years and concentrate on this," – you will lose that market, too.

I have a function which is, perhaps, wider than it should be for my capacity to handle, I do not know. But I try my best. I am not sure you are trying your best. Why should I say I am not sure? I am **absolutely** sure you are not doing your best. That is a tragedy, because when spirituality is being brought to your doorstep, which was the promise my Master made, that spirituality will be brought to your doorstep. Think of Him and He will be there.

I have often this suspicion that Sahaj Marg is too easily available to people nowadays. Had there been the time that you have to wander all over the Himalayas and stand on your head and do *asanas*, it would have been nice. That is distraction number one. [laughter, as pizza had just arrived]

Well, to come back to the subject, when things are made too easy, people lose respect for what they are getting. I mean, it would be bloody foolish to think that it is too easy and therefore you should... because you should look inside and see what you are going to lose. Now Don was talking about too easy an availability of everything, including love, here, but the love that you get so easily is not the real thing. It is of the streets, sidewalks, with a lot of AIDS attached to it — not 'aid' any more, but in the plural, with an 's' attached to it.

Now to think of that as love, it is worse than animal for us to think of it as love. If you go to the next higher level of so-called social love, where you easily fall in love and start whatever activities are associated with love, that too is not love. Love is something which has to be worked for. I have never believed in this business of falling in love at first sight, and I always make a joke: we **fall** in love, you see, in the Western mode of falling in love.

There should be a **rising** in love, there should be an elevation, there should be a joy, there should be an exuberance, there should be an expansion of consciousness itself. But here there is only a demeaning of the relationship, a grossening of the relationship, and it is a crime to call such a thing love. So, easy availability — please do not make the mistake — is not of love; it is of the other thing. Now, if you are so crude as to confuse that with love, well I do not know what to say, I can only pray for you.

So, in America there is no easy availability of anything. That which is easily available is, *per se*, stupid, crude, undesirable. Anything worthwhile having you have to work for. Please remember that. If it looks very cheap, be suspicious. If Sahaj Marg is touted as something simple: simple, yes — I have been trying to make this distinction for several years now — but not easy. A simple thing need not be easy. An easy thing need not be simple. Simple and complex: these are the two opposites. Easy and difficult: those are the two opposites. But people — I do not know whether it is an aspect of wishful thinking — associate simple with easy. I have known even advanced speakers in Sahaj Marg saying it is the easy path, it is the simple path, it is the natural path. I do not know, they wish, I think, to be taken straight to heaven on one of these modern jets; strap in and there you are.

So you see, this great American tradition that you have got it made, we have everything we want. But where is your happiness, where is your joy, where is the glow of the face that we should be seeing around us? I see only the glow of cosmetics. That is something which the great American people do not have: happiness, contentment. I see only miserable faces, you see, people come and weep.

Now a seminar like this, when Sahaj Marg is really established, when Sahaj Marg is really practised, when you have really achieved something, there should be only be joy, abounding joy. There may be a sorrow of parting for a moment when somebody is leaving, but I find there is so much a part of artificiality creeping into our existence that we do not know what we are doing, we do not know why we are doing what we are doing, you know, you do not know what for you are doing what you are doing.

It has become a sort of a very nonchalant attitude, as I said in the beginning, a very casual attitude to Sahaj Marg. "Well, this guy has come all the way from India, you know, he is going to be here for seven days. Great. Let me see him this weekend or just for one sitting." Some people came this morning to Blaine.

You see, it is not that I expect you to come and bow down before me. My regret is that such a thing as has never been offered before to human beings, is being brought to you, and you do not have the time to accept it. Then what else can we do? I am sure if I stayed a whole year here there are people who would never come to see. It is not a question of staying for a week or a month or a year. I could stay for one whole year in Burnaby and there would be people here who would not come to see us. I am talking of abhyasis now. They are too busy or they are going out for meetings or they have a girlfriend in Hawaii who is hollering from there, "What the heck are you doing there? Come on, we do not want any darn guru in this life of ours."

Today the demands of a girlfriend are more important than the demands of your own spiritual existence. The demands of your dollar are more demanding than the demands of your spiritual existence. What place has spirituality in your life? So, you have to do, my dear brothers and sisters, a great deal of heart searching. It is not going to be too easy as we go along, not because the old man is not available, or I am going to be available less and less, but because you are accepting less and less of one, and more and more of the other, which is leading to more and more unbalance, whereas it should be the other way around.

Money is easily made. Money is easily lost. Today's millionaire is tomorrow's pauper. Today's girlfriend is tomorrow somebody else's girlfriend. Today's boyfriend is somebody else's boyfriend tomorrow. All these are transient things, because you have no fixed social structure here where you can say, "He is mine." Your society does not permit it, it does not condone it. I am sure some girls here who have fixed boyfriends are being laughed at by other girls, "Why you are going ahead with the same fellow year after year?" My wife was shocked when in Denmark, two years back, some Danish girls asked her, "Sulochana, how can you be with the same man for twenty-six years?"

You see, it has become something of a fashion. Denmark is an extreme example, but the same spirit pervades the great North American public, to a lesser extent perhaps in Europe. So, you see the thing it has become: you are not only flippant where spirituality is involved, you are flippant where life is involved. You are just throwing the dollar up and whether it is the eagle which comes or the bald head comes, life is for you a gamble. That is not what it should be.

Spirituality is a very serious business. You can make or break in the physical life in terms of prosperity, wealth, health. But the seeds of the future existence, the seeds of evolutionary progress are also laid in this life, and if you disturb that, if you disturb the path of spiritual progress, if you do not nurture it, nourish it, promote it as you should promote your gardens... You know, you are keeping your gardens so beautifully clean, what about the inner garden in the heart?

You spend hours mowing lawns, which is stupid. Grass will die by itself if you leave it alone. One week it is there, next week it is all flat on the ground. One rain, one wind — it is finished. How much energy you are wasting in trimming your lawns, trimming your nails, manicuring your whatever else you have got? But the inside is left derelict. "No, no, I have to water my garden today, Chari, I cannot come for satsangh." I am amazed at the appalling stupidity of people today, that their gardens, their cats, their boyfriends, these are more important than spiritual progress, which should be and must be, and will eventually have to be, your only and primary concern.

Remember one lesson of evolution: that that which does not evolve does not merely die, the whole thing becomes extinct. If you study geology, evolutionary biology, the whole history of evolution is replete with whole life streams which have become extinct. It is like a river: either it finds a path to flow or it stops. You cannot say, "I shall remain a human being for twenty generations or two thousand generations and enjoy this life." Nature will put the guillotine, you know. Nature will not tolerate non-evolutionary streams of life. It has its own purpose.

If you live your life in such a way that your life co-operates with that main evolutionary purpose of existence, you will have a nice life, believe me, because the two are now in confluence. But if you think you have a right that you can live your life as you choose, yes, the mills of God grind slowly but surely. Eventually it will be cut. I am talking of the whole human race, you see, not of one individual now. Enormous things in this supreme existence on Earth have been just puffed out.

Today, for those of you who saw the planetarium program, there was this comment about the Minoan civilization. It just vanished without any reason, without trace. Nobody knows what happened. Atlantis, if it was the same as the Minoans, we do not know, same thing happened. Nature has to just [blows] and it can wipe out whole civilizations, it can wipe out galaxies. Therefore, we must all remember my Master's words, so long as you co-operate in the purpose of Nature… It is like a job. If you are a salesman in a company and you are promoting the sales of the products that company makes, it keeps you. If you do not, out you go.

In the great American republic there is no loyalty either way. So long as you perform your function well, you are paid for it anyway. The moment you do not you are just cut like that. There is no loyalty. It is not like Japan where you have lifetime service. That is the same thing happening in your marital life. One moment they are together, the next moment they are gone, you see, *Gone With the Wind*, the great old famous picture of forty years ago.

This is a society which cuts and snips and throws away. Beware of this society. You are part of it. You are in a jail without knowing you are in the prison. It is a nice thing with big courtyards, air-conditioned prison, modern toilets, television programs, thirty-two channels — in prison, mind you! But if you make the mistake of thinking you are in a palace, you are putting yourself deeper and deeper into that prison.

The great American republic is a myth. It needs somebody from outside to see the realities of your social existence, your cultural existence, the poverty of these existences. I am not trying to be high and mighty, you know, I am nothing. But it is for your sake I am making this remark. If you fall into this trap of dollars, and pizzas, and fast foods, and fast cars, and fast women, you will have a fast life — and that is not much.

So, please be a little more serious about spirituality. Do not expect to be patted on the back. It is not my habit, nor is it necessary. Curse you, revile you, kick you perhaps in the back if it is necessary, that is my job because it is something to make you awake. Sleeper awake! It is not that people are bad, it is that they are asleep. They are in some sort of self-induced coma, self-induced hypnosis, that this world is good. "I am the great American in the great American republic and I have nothing to be afraid of." Who is to be blamed?

Please remember, spirituality is the purpose of existence. It is not a part of your existence. It is not something to which you can come as in play or for diversion or for a momentary affair with it — *L'affaire de coeur*, as the French say. It has to be a lasting single purpose in life, to which everything else must contribute. If your millions contribute to your spiritual growth, by all means make more millions. If your knowledge contributes to your spiritual evolution, by all means acquire knowledge. But do not forget the spiritual existence, which is the prime, only, sole purpose of this life. If that is not remembered and acted upon, I assure you the time will come when the cutting will happen.

I do not mean individually, because we are too puny to attract Nature as individuals. It is civilizations which are destroyed, which are just forgotten by the mainstream of evolution. They are there one moment, they are not there the next moment. Nature, God — these powers of cosmic scope — have no time to look at individuals. But the individuals form the stream of evolution, like every drop of water forms the river and the ocean into which it is flowing. And when this is getting more and more turbid, more and more stinking, Nature says stop. It has only to extend its hand and that is finished. The same hand that extends in blessing, the same hand comes in closing a chapter of evolution.

So, as I have been saying quite often, we have as a duty, whether we recognize it or not, whether we accept it or not, it is a duty imposed by life on life itself. I do not exist for my enjoyment or pleasure or self-satisfaction or personal growth. I exist to contribute to the growth of a place, of a nation, of a world, of a universe, perhaps. That I can do only by evolving myself. My personal evolution is but a part of the cosmic evolution to which I must contribute. Therefore my personal evolution is of value, is something in which I must involve myself seriously, with total single-minded attention, forgetting everything else if necessary.

Tradition is full of the lives of saints if you study. We are thinking of renouncing, you know, taking a holiday for a week, taking off time to come for meditation, leaving the girlfriend alone for two hours on the beach to come here, and we think these are big sacrifices. But the ultimate sacrifice is, we might have to give our lives for the purpose for which we are here. It is not frightening at all, because when the river blends into the sea the river no longer exists, but it does exist in a very real sense. Whereas if it becomes a fetid pool of water, it is only going to stink and stink and stink and be evaporated away.

So, in losing our identity in a spiritual sense, having evolved into that which is identity-less, lies the real goal of spiritual evolution. Let us not look any more to satisfaction, to knowledge, to ego fulfillment, but let us look to the real purpose of Sahaj Marg. I assure you it is a very, very, very serious purpose. It is not flippant, it is not to be laughed at, pooh-poohed at. Well, it is your privilege to do all these things, but if you are left behind, somebody will wave goodbye to you from inside, and that is the last thought of it.

I wished to speak to you with more love and with more, shall we say, sympathy and rapport, and evoke smiles, but I am here to do something, not please some people. I am here to do something with you and to seek your co-operation for the future for your welfare. I consider I have really spoken with a great deal of love, because when I open my mouth in this fashion and risk your anger and your annoyance, it is like a man putting all his money on a single number on the gambling tables. Do or die. Today I am here.

I am always reminded of that old famous anonymous little tiny poem: "I shall come this way but once. Any good that I may do therefore let me do now, for I may never come this way again." So, this is the job that I am trying to do.

Many people write to me and weep and say, "Oh, we know we were with Babuji for twelve years and we never really made any use of him. We lost all that time. At least now, Chari, with you we should not lose what opportunity we have of evolution," and this, that and that, blah, blah. But are they serious about it when they write such things? Because Babuji, Chariji — there is no difference. The thing is spirituality. It is milk I want; whether it is in a glass container or a paper bottle, it does not matter. So the container has very little value. It is the thing that the container contains that matters. If you lose, and instead of the milk you put in a drop of whiskey, who is to be blamed? I am always trying to tell my friends, do not take this pessimistically. Human life is a very fragile thing. We may be at the peak of what we think is health and happiness and everything, but you are here one moment and the next moment there is only the name in the obituary column. Too often I have seen this.

When people put it off and say, "Oh, what is the hurry? Let me make my next million, or let me have my affair with this girlfriend before I start. Or, let me wait till I am fifty-five. What is the hurry, Chari? I am only twenty-eight, thirty-two, forty-four, fifty-six." You hear this at all ages. Even people at seventy say, "You know, what is the hurry?" It is not that we expect to die the next moment but, as my Master said, "Wisdom is in living as if you are going to die the next moment." This urgency of purpose — if I know that I am going to die within an hour what would I do now? Would I eat pizza? Would I go to a bar with a girlfriend? Would I be on the beach?

This seriousness of purpose must be brought to bear on every moment of our existence, because which moment will be our last we do not know. Even in my Master's own case we were fooled. He told me, "I will live up to 2006 or 2007." He did not say it once, he said it so many times. I have a feeling that old man just left because he was disgusted with us. It is not a feeling, I am convinced of it. Because for such a personality there is no death which can take him away from this world. He told me in Paris in 1982, "I want to go." I said, "Where? We are still six days here in Paris." He said, "No, I want to go there." And you know he was weeping. I was alone with Kashiram in the room, he was weeping with tears down his eyes and he said, "What has this Mission come to? Nobody even asks me when there is satsangh, whether I should give satsangh or not? Everybody has become the President of the Mission, and the Mission has no discipline in it." I said, "Babuji, why are you worried? It is their loss." He said, "Yes, but what will I answer Lalaji when I go to see him?"

So, history seems to repeat itself again and again. His problem was not of humanity. [break in tape] ...so shocked I could not weep with him. "What will I tell my Master? What will I answer him when he says, 'Ram Chandra, what have you made of this Mission?'?" These were his exact words. And it was not his fault.

So you see, we always... I have seen in human life guests come to us when they are with us. When they come first we are happy. Few days, they prolong their visit, we are miserable, "When is this guy going?", we will add. But at the railway station or the plane, at the airport when he is going we are again weeping. We seem to be happy only at the moment of entry and moment of exit; in between it is all misery. A child is born, there is a lot of joy, weeping with joy, too. All the other time it is misery. We cannot love a person when that person is with us. I think human beings absolutely lack this capacity. We can only love the departed.

All of you are welcome to examine your hearts. You do not have to speak about it, but who exists here who has not tormented a brother or a sister or a father or a mother while they were alive and is now weeping for it? You see, this is a human failing of the highest calamitous order, that we cherish nothing which we have. We are running after mirages which we do not have.

The same thing as, I suppose, the Master. When he was there we took him very casually. "Yes, yes, Babuji is a nice man sitting with his hookah smoking, lovely jokes he gives us, you know. And it is so peaceful in Shahjahanpur." But he ended his existence as an act of will, frustrated, disgusted. It is like a man quitting his job. He said, "Okay, I am going home." Or perhaps Lalaji in his mercy said, "Do not waste your time. Come back."

Now it is not his... he has not lost anything. For him it is a necessary release — that he was able to go away a quarter century earlier than he should have is surely for him a blessing. I would love to leave, because my booking is confirmed. My place is there. The longer I have to live here, the more of pain. So, I am not worried about my Master going away twenty-five years earlier, you see, but I am worried about us.

Please try to realise it is no use writing books and reading books and praising the Master and extolling him. It is all a waste of time. Are you willing to do what he wants you to do? Become what he wants you to become? Otherwise it is no use talking about him. It is hypocrisy. It is like praising an ex-husband or an ex-wife. "No, no, she was a nice girl. We still meet." That is something which we could never find in Indian society. If a husband and wife did divorce or separate, they would not see each other for the rest of their lives. But here it is too common. The present wife with the past wife, the children of both all coming for pizzas together on the beach.

So you see, we are trying to be something which is part of the evolutionary stream of life. We should re-examine our position vis-à-vis Sahaj Marg, vis-à-vis our selves, inner self, every day. Am I doing what I should be doing? Or am I doing something which I need not choose? And then cut, like you prune your plants and your gardens. I saw one man climbing on a fourteen-foot stepladder, manicuring, with absolute geometric precision, a hedge about fifteen feet high, on the way when we were coming here. He looked like a Filipino, perhaps; must be employed by a millionaire who is living inside who pays more attention to his hedge than to his hair. See what have we come to.

This is the closing message I would like to give. Be serious about what you should be serious about. Forget the rest.

Thank you.

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MESSAGE OF THE HEART

San Jose, California, USA
2 August, 1989

Bill used the word 'evolution', and that is a word which I am very fond of. Because often, when we speak of yoga, yogic systems, yogic practice, everywhere, even in India, you see, they have this idea that they are going to get something. Much of yoga has been, of course, directed toward acquisition of special powers — *siddhis*, as we call them in Sanskrit — extraordinary powers, superhuman powers, almost divine powers. There has been a heavy emphasis on getting some powers and wielding power. The history of yoga in India is replete with this sort of thing. There is, however, a small branch of yoga called raja yoga, which came into prominence, I think, with Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and some people in his time. It was practised earlier by many saints of India, and it deals with the evolutionary aspect of existence: not with getting powers, but with becoming something.

Broadly speaking, human life has four fields of activity, of expression: the physical, the mental/intellectual, the spiritual, and then there are supposed to be regions beyond that, of which literature does not speak much. With physical growth we are all very familiar. All the modern technology of food processing, food consumption, vitamins, knowledge of disease, disease control, medical systems, health, jogging, weighing scales in bathrooms. So you see, the physical does not need any elaboration. From preserving life to making the body beautiful in the old Greco-Roman tradition, to making it fit, super-fit, extraordinarily fit, making it almost a machine, as exemplified in your sports fields. Tennis stars especially, you see, who play like machines, computerized machines, almost. Killer instinct — it has to be developed to win.

So the physical does not need any elaboration. We have come to such a level where even our pets have special foods, special doctors, special medicines. And in some countries it is taken to such extents that we do not know whether the human is living for the pet or the pet for the human beings. So, that is the physical.

Now we come to the mental. Here I would like to mention one point, that physical growth is strictly limited. You come with a certain potential at birth. Many people do not achieve that potential. Some can surpass it, but not by too much. One who is destined to grow to five feet ten inches may grow to five feet eleven inches or six feet, but you cannot grow to seven feet and eight feet and nine feet. So, in the physical world we are strictly and severely limited by the potentials that we bring in. Mentally, it is said, there is a little more chance of becoming something other than you are through education, because the mental evolution is more flexible. In the body we are conditioned by the body, the bones and the flesh, the muscles, the sinews. The mind is not so restricted.

That is why you find there have been these enormously, shall we say, energizing examples throughout history of people who had practically no potential, and yet became leaders in the world. Helen Keller is, for instance, an outstanding example. Then you have this mathematician today at Cambridge, Stephen Hawking, who is supposed to be perhaps the successor to Newton and Einstein. You all remember his book, *A Brief History of Time*, recently published, last year. He is confined to a wheelchair. He has got one of those dreadful diseases where he cannot move, where he can do nothing but shake his fingers. And with that, he is a professor at Cambridge, and he is made out to be at the point of going beyond Einstein, perhaps heralding that dream of Einstein, you know, the Unified Field Theory, whatever that may be. I am not a mathematician, you see.

So you see, as we leave the physical behind, our potential seems to become more and more unlimited. That is why today, in the Silicon Valley, you have all these big brains from all over the world. It is not just the Americans who are contributing to an industry here, it is the Indian, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Korean, the what have you. All nationalities are here. Which proves that when you transcend the merely physical, the shape of the hair, the colour of the hair, the colour of the skin, which divide races and beings, and you come to the mental sphere, the intellectual, there is the possibility of a unification of human beings. People can live together, work together, earn together, spend together, destroy themselves together, or build themselves together.

Spirituality goes even one step more than that. In mental spheres, intellectual spheres, there are still limitations. Everybody cannot be an Einstein. You may have a brilliant boy, but he cannot be an Einstein. A fieldworker, a farmer's son, can surely get a doctorate in science, can become a computer scientist. But there is the difference between the gifted musician and a master of music, you see, a composer, a divine messenger of music. All gifted musicians do not make the grade. They are very good, but there is that little difference between the true professional and the gifted amateur.

So, there are these limits, even in these spheres. But in the spiritual field, the masters of spirituality say, "There are no limits at all." To put it in another way, my Master used to say, "At the physical, everything is limited. At the mental, most limitations can be removed by effort. At the spiritual, limitations do not exist at all." Then he used to add sometimes in a little depressed voice, with a little sorrow, that, "Human beings are breaking their heads and hearts in the field in which everything is limited, the field of material existence, and forgetting that field in which everybody can soar." Like Icarus, you know, to the sun, but not burn his wings. He said, "I cannot understand this phenomenon of the human mind. It is almost like a rat in a maze which will only go and bang itself against the very avenue which is blocked to it; or like a fly trapped in a room which will go and you know, bang itself against a window pane, when all it has to do is take a ninety degree turn and fly off to freedom this way." This is a very mystifying thing.

The second mystifying thing is, the more intelligent the person — you will excuse me for saying it, because I assume we are dealing here with the cream of the Silicon Valley [laughter] — but it is a very mystifying thing that the more intelligent the person, the less flexibility he has. There is almost a tendency to worship the intellect, the intellectual sphere, the halls of learning, as something of unsurpassed beauty and dignity, you know, value. I concede all this. They are temples of learning. But that they are unsurpassed, and that there is nothing beyond the intellect… It is difficult to imagine that intelligent people can be so foolish as to imagine that nothing beyond the intellect exists.

This is one of the problems we face: that simple people, who are not so very well educated, who are also having the same problems that the intelligent and the super-intelligent people have, find it easier to undertake a process in which they seek evolution in a sphere where every possibility is there before them. They say, "Okay, I accept that in this material world I cannot go beyond this, because I have heredity against me, I have class prejudices, racial prejudices against me, I have the institution against me, the system is against me. So, let me take something in which there is no limitation, no difference between one and another." But when you come to the intelligent people, often they ask, "Why do I need spirituality? I have got everything I need, you see, two car home, swimming pool at the back" — I am talking now especially of Californians — "I have got it made, Chari." But they are the people who are nurturing secret sorrows in their heart, fears in their heart, insecurity in their heart.

The American system is a very good system. It rewards merit, it rewards effort, abundantly. But I have also heard that here there is no love lost between employer and employee. To terminate service is only a matter of a moment. At one moment, you can be the most favoured employee, receiving the most favoured treatment, but when something goes wrong, the scissors are out.

So you see, this is a life in which the heart does not play much of a role. It is all the marketplace, as we say in economics. Even I have heard children, children of our own abhyasis, saying, "My father is a damn good provider." When I first heard these words, I was rather mystified. I said, "Is that all that your dad is?" And they said, "Oh, no, no. I love him, too." [laughter] The addition of that word 'too' was somewhat of a more mystifying thing, you see: that all that a father represents is a good house with some sort of, you know, game parlors in the back, video games, a well-stocked refrigerator, two-gallon cans of ice cream, Häagen Daz if possible.

It is as if something is lost here. The feeling of permanence does not exist. There is total insecurity. I know mothers of our Mission, they write to me that they are terrified of sending their children to school. They do not know what will happen, whether the child will ever come back or not. Fear of kidnap, fear of rape, the fear of accidents, which is something trivial in the United States: people do not seem to care so much about accidents nowadays.

So you see, there is much beyond all this facade of rich and wealthy and opulent living and a show of contentment to the external world, reflected in statements such as, "I have a big house, I have a swimming pool, I have two cars. What more do you want?"

My Master used to say, "Whenever a person says, 'I am happy because...', he cannot be happy. 'I am happy,' period. Yes: he or she is happy." "I am happy because my cat is beautiful and it won a prize." Well, your happiness is dependent upon your cat. If it had not won a prize, you would have been miserable. It is the whole gamut of experience spread out, you see.

What I am trying to aim at is, our lives here are conditioned, our happiness is conditioned by the circumstances of life that are before us, not by an inner happiness which should be a permanent thing within us. It is one of the classic statements of my Master that, "He who is happy under all circumstances is the truly happy person." Now, life cannot be all happiness, all health, all wealth, always pleasure. Like a sine curve, it keeps going up and down. The ocean would not be an ocean without its waves. It has its tops and it has its depths; it has its in tides and its outgoing tides. Why a person should be happy only under certain circumstances and not under others, a spiritual person cannot possibly understand, because if you are putting your happiness in things outside yourself, it is like putting your money outside yourself: it can be taken away.

So, the whole thrust of spirituality is not against materialism. Please do not misunderstand. If I could be a millionaire, I would love to be a millionaire, too. I do not have the time. The whole problem is, how to be a millionaire and not be attached to your millions? How to be a multi-millionaire and not be happy just because you are a multi-millionaire, but be happy because you are yourself what you are. After all, you made the millions, and to transfer that happiness to the millions instead of to yourself is something really crazy, isn't it?

A man paints a painting, it is destroyed in a fire. Let us say, God forbid, he is miserable. Well, if you can paint one you can paint some more. You are the artist, not your picture. You are the earner, not the money that you have earned. You are the professor, not the teachings that you are submitting. You are the program, not that floppy disk which you are producing by the hundreds for sale. After all, you are part computer programmers, you see.

My son, who was studying in Wisconsin, used to tell me of a guy who was studying for his PhD in chemistry or some applied chemistry field. He had his thesis ready for submission, and he had to go to see his professor. He took all five typed copies of his thesis in his car. On the way to the professor he had an accident, his car was burned, and all copies of his thesis with it. And he was heart-broken. I mean, you cannot recreate a thesis like that, you see, five years' work, a doctoral thesis. But you know, after a few weeks of mourning, sullenness, depression, he got furious tendencies, "Where the hell is God? Who the hell is He? They say God is love? Is this kindness? Is this love?" [laughter] The whole gamut of an emotional outburst. He came to his senses. He just forgot chemistry, and became an agriculturist, and he is doing very well. [laughter] He is doing very well indeed, and he is very happy, he is very content, because he is in touch with Nature. He is doing something which he was destined to do, which he is happy to do, in which he is happy himself.

You see, often destiny plays what appear to be cruel tricks with us. But if you just have the patience to wait, you can laugh at destiny. Destiny is something to be laughed at, you see. We are afraid of destiny. Who is destiny? What is destiny? I am my destiny. So, in a very real sense, yoga says, "Son, daughter, brother, what have you, do not think you are a victim of circumstances, or of some malignant or benevolent god who is doling out the gifts from above, you see, or the punishment, or the torture. You have created your present in your past. Yesterday, day before yesterday, last year, it does not matter which past. If you could create your present in the past, can you not create your future in the present?" All that yoga says is, "Go ahead! More programs? Yes! Work twenty-four hours? Yes! But find some time for your inner growth, inner development, so that like a seesaw, the inner and outer are balanced. You are a millionaire outside; be a millionaire inside, too. Otherwise, there is imbalance."

You know, one of my most profound insights into spirituality and this question of balance, came when I was seeing a hawk flying. How, by just tilting one wing, it turns a circle. The same with planes. You cannot turn when you are flying with your wings level. Now this is precisely what yoga says. When your material wing is too much heavy, too heavy and too depressed, and your spiritual wing is not at all there, you are going around in circles. It is also true that if you are only depending on religion and spirituality, and going this way, you are turning circles in the opposite way. It is no good to depend on one thing alone, you see. Life consists of two wings: the spiritual and the material. They must be in balance. When the wings are in balance, you go straight. There is no more turning around in circles. So you see, it is a simple message: balance your inner existence with your outer existence.

It is wrong to think that spiritual people are against the material life. That is true of certain systems of yoga where they preach celibacy and extreme forms of renunciation: self-inflicted pain and things like that. But not in this raja yoga system, where in fact they say it is all wrong to do these things. It is as bad to pamper yourself as to sort of torture yourself. Neither is necessary. Live sensibly, live a balanced existence. Like you are trying to balance your food — proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, salts, what have you.

Balance your existence itself, and when this balance is achieved, then you will find the true contentment.

Most of our discontent comes not because we do not have enough outside us, as we imagine. Because a millionaire wants more millions. You have six computers, you want a seventh, because now there is too much work for six; then you hook into the national link, then the international link. Then you find everybody is busy, you have no time, the modem is at fault. Something goes wrong in the telegraph wires! So, there is always frustration. You reach a point, and then there is frustration. In fact, Einstein himself has defined that even the best minds reach a particular frontier beyond which they cannot go, and he says that frontier is God. Einstein was the scientist of scientists. And he played music. Everybody knows he was a great violinist. He took time to try somehow to nurture his inner growth, even though it was only with music. He let his emotional life have a play, depending on himself, satisfying himself, performing by himself, for himself, to himself. But we do nothing else, you see. We are twenty-four hours working on our computers now. Of course we make more money, but are we happy?

There are some people I know who are moving houses like crazy, from a one-room studio apartment, to three bedrooms, to seven bedrooms, to fourteen bedrooms. There is no happiness. After all, a man can sleep on only one bed. "I have seven toilets and bathrooms in my house!" "Yes, but we can use only one!" [laughter] And such people rarely have more than two guests, three guests. Because, with opulence, the heart seems to shrink. That is why we call our way the way of the heart. With the intellect ... you know, some of the modern writers who are dealing with the subject of mind over matter are quite excited about the prospects that the mind has to offer. But my Master used to say, "What about the heart over the mind? After all, if your heart says no, whatever your mind might say, there is no point in rebelling against it."

Always, trouble arises in our life situations when the heart points one way and the head points another way. All problems of morality, of etiquette, of ethics, are precisely the problem of the struggle between the heart and the head. It is not that we cannot be subservient to a set of rules, or that we are the great American people who are free, who can do what we like. It is the struggle inherent in life: that the heart and the mind must co-operate if I am to be happy. But we are only following the mind; we are relegating the heart to some limbo of forgotten existence. It exists today only as a physical heart pumping away madly. Perhaps that is why we have so much heart disease. Not the cholesterol and all this, you see. The cholesterol was there in my grandfather's day. I mean, we have not discovered cholesterol. Cholesterol exists; it has existed. So have fats. So have polyglycerides — whatever we want to give names to. Our grandfathers did not die so easily.

Then people, you know, in the halls of learning and wisdom, come out with stress theories, strain theories, stresses of modern existence. But what is the stress? Is it physical? Is it emotional? Of course! But then you forget that the main stress is between the heart and the head.

So you see, we are offering yoga not so much for God realisation, because nobody knows who God is or where He is or why He is. If He is there, what is He doing? This is a question which is frequently asked: what is that old guy up there doing? Well, one supposes He is going about His business. I have often felt that He has created the universe under a certain set of laws, and it is now working according to the laws. And we are there. If you co-operate with His scheme of things, life is good. If you go against it, life is bad. That is one way of looking at it. I do not insist that you accept it, but I would again suggest that there is somebody inside you here, which you call the voice of the conscience, which if you do not obey, you are going to destroy yourself.

This is the tragedy which leads to drink, to drugs, to all sorts of things that you know of, in an effort to escape your conscience, run away from your conscience, seek solace in extraneous sources of, what you call it, infatuation, temporary or permanent. Temporary or permanent forgetfulness. Ultimately, very tragically, it can end in suicide, which is the ultimate extinction of the self.

So, yoga should not be thought of just as some esoteric nonsense from the East, which is for those who have enough time to do it, who have nothing better to do, who can in any case not do anything better. You know, I have heard all these things myself.

I used to be irritated when I was younger, because then I had the arrogance that I could take any one of you on single-handed in the intellectual field, if not the physical. I do not pretend to be a genius, but it does not take much to earn $100,000 a year, or $200,000, for that matter. But it does take a great deal to even start meditating, because we have to fight all these in-built inhibitions, in-built ignorances: that yoga is for the weak, it is for the nincompoop, it is for the man who is a failure in material life.

We have to overcome all of these barriers which have been indoctrinated in us by a foolish society. It is as good as saying that blindness — you know, they say in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. If there was no one-eyed man, they would say, "Why do we need eyes? We've been getting along fairly well without eyes." You have to read stories like Gulliver, and all the old stories we read as children, to see how foolish we **can** be. Those stories were not merely for children. It is my submission that even adults should read them once a year. "Mirror, mirror, on the wall" — Snow White. The modern cosmetics industry is flourishing on that principle: Who is the fairest of them all? Every lady is trying to outwit the next. The cosmetics industry would perish without that. Even Einstein. One of the writers on Einstein has quoted from *Alice in Wonderland*, where one character says, "You have to run all the time here just to stay where you are."

So, wisdom is buried in these small places, in these stories for children, in the myths of the past; not in the modern traditions of science. These are facts, facts and figures. Technologically oriented development. Yes, they can give you a better standard of living. But what about a better standard of **inner** life? You have only to look at your neighbours and, if you have the courage, at yourself, to see what the external life has really meant to you. Has it meant all that you expected it to mean when you set out as a youngster, you know, with two dollars in your pocket? I am told there are multi-millionaires in Silicon Valley who came here with ten dollars. But I also tell them that my Master started out his spiritual journey with nothing in his pockets.

Please do not make the mistake of thinking that yoga is something esoteric, something out of this world, something which we can relegate to the last period of life, when everything has been done, when the fires have burnt down, when the body cannot perform any more, cannot enjoy anything: "Then let me think of yoga!" It is not for that stage of life. Because then you will not be able to sit down and regulate your mind. Anyone can regulate the body. After all, if you look at the great trapeze artists in the great circuses, they were ordinary girls and boys that could be trained. Elephants are being trained to balance on a football, tigers to go through rings of fire. All these mysteries, things of which you cannot imagine the animals and the birds and the insects to be capable of, you have been able to do. But we have not been able to do anything with ourselves. If you face a problem, you are not able to solve it; if you are not able to solve it, you go into depression; if you go into depression, you become obnoxious everywhere: to yourself, to your surroundings. You lose friends, you lose the family.

So, is it not a vital necessity that you should learn to project yourself from inside, rather than project yourself from outside? Is it not necessary that you should be something **in** yourself, rather than what you are as shown by your outer possessions, by your houses and your cars and your horses and your dogs? This wealth, that we should have inside, which has been forgotten — not lost, fortunately; it is still there, a very dim lamp, burning away — it can be blown up, and that is what we try to do in yoga.

I repeat again, forget all these esoteric things, God... I do not believe in a God personally myself. And it is not a joke, you see, it is not necessary. Because God has put Himself within us. We could not exist otherwise. You see, there is a danger in the material civilization. It is a beautiful civilization. It has given us extraordinary things of unimagined beauty, relevance, necessity, need-fulfilling. But it puts us outside ourselves. It makes us dependent on things outside ourselves. Also, this 'instant culture' as I call it — instant coffee, instant tea — it makes us impatient. We have not the patience to wait any more. So, we are able to tolerate third-grade coffee in American homes instead of the best-brewed coffee, which would take fifteen minutes to brew in any case, but which would give you a satisfying flavour and linger in your memory for days.

So you see, two dangers are inherent in this. One, it makes us, in a sense, exogamous, dependent upon things outside. If it rains, I am miserable, I have to go on a picnic. It rains, we are miserable. Why on earth should it rain today? Why not? The rain does not know picnics. If my car stops on the highway, I am finished. First of all, there is the inconvenience; second, there is the odium, that my $45,000 Mercedes 460SEL has stopped. How dare it stop? When you are dependent on these things, then you have lost the ability to get out and walk. Today I find that on the American roads you cannot walk. They are not meant for walkers. They are meant only for cars. There are no sidewalks, there are no pavements.

Once, when I was going on a walk last year in Atlanta in the early morning, half past four, there were fifty people behind me, and a guy in a truck stopped. He was very curious first, then he became very angry, and you know, the rear part of the truck was full of empty beer cans. He could not understand why some damned fool of a guy would walk! What happens to the great American automobile industry if people start walking? [laughter]

See, this is the question they ask themselves. But then you jog, isn't it? And you go swimming, and you want to lose your weight, and you have all these machines, you go to any of these big marts, you have walking machines, you have rowing machines, you have skiing machines. Again, a reflection of your culture: do it where you are, do not go out for it. It is better to go on the snowy mountains and ski there, you see, something you get natural, natural control over your muscles. You master an element. But here, sitting and rowing away, you know, like... [laughter]

This is the danger in a material civilization, that it denigrates the value of the natural, the real, and transfers all value to something man-made, makes us suffer in that man-made environment; because, ipso facto, being man-made, it is man-destructible. What man has made, man can destroy. Then, of course, you have all this war paranoia created by politicians, that imminent danger, and then the San Andreas business. Even just before I came here, a medium warned me in Europe, "Chari, do not go there. Because September this year everything there is going to go crack." [laughter] Now, what I am suggesting is not the foolishness of the mediums, nor the fear of the people, but the paranoia under which we exist. You do not know how much the state of California is spending on seismic research and things like that, earthquake control. I would not be surprised if half the taxes that you pay are going into that. So, somebody is handling this paranoia on a grand scale, isn't it? [laughter]

So you see, we have to transfer this whole illusory existence, which we call *maya* in Sanskrit, back into the inside: I am happy because here I am happy, I am wealthy because here I am wealthy. Here is the God who created me sitting inside me, the master of my existence, the controller of my existence, my internal guide, one who does not come into being with birth nor leave me at death. He is there ever as a part of me, an integral part of me, something which cannot be separated from me. Let me depend on Him. Let me seek the inner light, the inner blessings. Let me go into that universe which is inside me, which is vaster, vaster beyond imaginable terms, than the existing universe here outside. They say this manifest universe is about twenty billion light years in size. I dare say if you could delve into your hearts and look at the universe within your heart, this universe will be a mere speck of matter in it.

So you see how much we are neglecting. We are not neglecting just a science or an art which exists; we are neglecting a practice, we are neglecting an inner universe which exists which, being inside me, is ever with me; which is full of what I put into it, which is full of divinity, of love. If I am able to create that within me, it is like that astronomical feature, you know, where a cloud of gas, by its own gravity, condenses, falls into itself and becomes a sun. You will become light yourself; you will become love yourself. You will no longer love people — you will no longer love as a verb; you **are** love.

It is this transformation that we seek in this system of yoga. It is not powers, because powers can be got easily. Most powers destroy us. It is well known that people destroy themselves with their own money. You do not need somebody else's money to destroy yourself with.

So you see, it is not God we are talking about, it is you we are talking about: you and the God within you, who is struggling to express Himself, but whose voice we have forgotten, we have neglected, whom we have rejected. Therefore, He is keeping very quiet. All that it needs is a tap on His shoulder and He is up.

It is often difficult to explain what yoga is, because we have all these yogic traditions: hatha yoga, all the *asanas*, the breath control, *pranayama*, the enormous powers by the awakening of the *kundalini*. They are very attractive to one who is not attracted to wine, women, and song, and money, which makes all these possible. These things become very attractive. But the real masters of yoga have always warned against mystic powers, psychic powers. Shun the path of power, because power can be turned against you. If you have a gun under your pillow, you think it is for your security, but conceivably an intruder could snatch that pistol from you and shoot you.

So, power is always dangerous. Power is two-edged, as we say, a double-edged weapon. One can never claim to have absolute control over power, like a father against himself. People have tried to commit suicide and have found that there was no bullet in the gun, or the sword was rusty. Yoga says shun power, ignore power, run away from power, because power is dangerous. Knowledge, similarly, they say yes, to the extent that you need to live this life, acquire that much knowledge. More, it is an unnecessary burden that you carry. I often remember an example from Einstein's life, when a student approached him and asked him, "What is the velocity of light?" He said, "I do not know, my son." The boy said, "Oh, you are the Nobel Prize winner and you do not know the velocity of light?" Einstein said, "I know where to look for it. You do not. That is the difference between you and me."

So you see, a great man does not have to be great because he knows things or because he has things or because he likes things or because he produces things. He must be great in himself, by himself, standing alone in this whole universe. Such a person was my Master.

Coming to the question of Master, Bill explained something about the Master which I would like to amplify. There is this feeling that when somebody is called Master, you are something of a slave. Now, there is no master, no slave. These people are called masters because they have mastered themselves. One who has mastered himself is called a master. Like you have master craftsman, master artisans, master carpenters. They are not your masters but they are masters of their craft, of their trade. A spiritual master is one who has mastered himself. And here is the final whole thrust of the matter, that one who has mastered himself or herself is master of the universe, because this universe in the heart is bigger than this universe outside. Herein lies the true mastery.

Therefore, before I close I would like to recapitulate again that here there is no question of God-seeking, God-finding, God not-finding, atheistics, you know. We do not care what you are, your religious affiliation. As I said, I do not necessarily believe in a God myself. For me, my God is my Master, because he showed me the God that is in me, which I eventually found is nothing but Himself in a formless manner. After all, we worship today, in the great religions, human figures as gods. If not gods, sons of gods. I do not see how a son of god can be less than a god himself.

Jesus Christ, the son of God, was a human being; Buddha was a human being; Mohammed was a human being — all the great figures — Krishna was a human being. God in the Hindu tradition is born in a physical form. It is only to say that through this human life you can reach the highest, which is not some form of limbo or escape. You know, liberation is often mistaken as an escape. "Oh, I do not want to live any more, Chari, and I do not want to come back here." Why not? What is so wrong with this life that we do not want to come back here again? It is wrong precisely because I have not found the inner balance that I should have, which, if I had, I would not mind continuing here for eternity if it was necessary. If it was necessary! Not out of choice, but out of need. So you see, these are the values, the true spiritual values.

But yoga, as it is purveyed in the West, at I do not know, fifty dollars a sitting, is doing a disservice to the science of yoga. Of course, they also come here to make money, because this is the great land where everybody can make money, first and foremost. I often believe that America suffers because of this, because you are getting people from all over the world who come here only to make money, who do not owe any allegiance to this great nation, this great country, this great tradition. But here, they come as people who go around picking berries for a few cents and walking off. I see it is a curse on the country, if you really look into the heart of the matter, and see what is going on.

But there it is; you cannot change things so fast on such a colossal scale, but you can begin with yourself first. The science of spirituality says, "Do not try to change the world. Try to change yourself, because if you change, the universe changes for you." The moment you lose your prejudice of your neighbour, he becomes a happy man, he becomes a friend. The man who was till yesterday grumpy and grouchy, who did not like the noise you were making, suddenly becomes a friend and says, "Hey Joe, what happened to your car? You set it right? It doesn't backfire any more," and you wonder what changed this guy. It was the change in you!

So you see, this is the great spiritual truth, that you cannot change an iota of existence outside yourself, but you can change everything within you. This is the possibility that yoga offers. It is to this possibility that we welcome you. It is for this I am grateful to you all for coming here, for you patiently listening to whatever I had to say. I hope you will take a little more interest in these things for your benefit.

This Mission, Shri Ram Chandra Mission as we call it, is a service organization. There are no fees, there is no money, there is no involvement, there is no allegiance to a guru or a master. There is nothing. There is only a practice which is offered to you in which we are prepared to help you, guide you on your spiritual progress.

So, I now propose that we meditate. I invite all of you to participate in it. Please do not think of it as some sort of a trial. It is not a product to be tested. It is an experience to be undergone, not even as a promise for the future, because one sitting makes no difference. But in some way you may be privileged to experience something which you cannot even explain to yourself, but which may push you on this road a little further.

Thank you.

(Talk given at public meeting)

13

CHILDREN'S MEETING WITH MASTER

West Point, Georgia, USA
11 August, 1989

Q: Why are we ever born if we are just supposed to die and go to God?

PR: Well, we are not born just to die to go to God. Life is supposed to be like a school. You know what is a school. You go to school and you can ask the same question, "Why do we go to school if you are only going to get out of school at the end of it?" Isn't it? You go to school to pass out of school! But in between you learn something. You learn what you have to learn or what you want to learn. You qualify yourself. Isn't it? Similarly, in life we qualify ourselves in certain ways by living here, by experiencing things, by knowing things, and then, out we go. So it is like a school classroom. We are not born just to die. You understand? Good question!

Q: What is God?

PR: Well, if we knew it, it would be very easy to answer that question, but nobody knows. My Master has said, "God cannot be known, because He is not an object. But His presence can be felt and experienced." Like you say you are happy, but you cannot see happiness. Isn't it? Or like electricity, which makes lights and fans and machines turn, but you do not ever see electricity yourself. God is like that.

Q: "I wish I was Chariji," one kid has written.

PR: It would not be so good if you are Chariji. It is not so good. It is better to be what you are and to develop into something wonderful. That is why we meditate. Next question.

Q: Why do you close your eyes in meditation?

PR: Because if we keep our eyes open we are going to be distracted by everything that passes in front of us and around us. In meditation we are supposed to look inside and try to have this idea that there is Divine light in the heart. And if we keep our eyes open we cannot do that. Okay, the next question.

Q: Since God made everything, why are there also bad things that God lets man do?

PR: You see, here we must understand one thing clearly. God did not make bad things. **We** make bad things, you see — people. It is like you have a kid to play with you and you expect the child to behave well and to play in a co-operative spirit, in a friendly manner. But suppose that kid becomes quarrelsome and angry and throws things around? Will you blame God, or that particular kid? So we must learn to correct our own behaviour and become good, so that God cannot be blamed for our faults.

Q: Why do you always have Jacky near you?

PR: It is a good question. I do not know myself. [laughs] That guy sticks to me like a leech. He is supposed to be looking after me. Do you believe it? You do! [laughter]

Q: I have been having some bad thoughts. In my mind I think I am up in heaven looking down at the world. What does this mean? It makes me sad. Should I be not sad?

PR: Well I do not think it is bad. We would all like to be good up there and look down. Not look down in the manner of looking with a bad look, but like you look out your window, you know. Of course, it should become, later on, real, you see — that you really become like God. Which is why people meditate. Nobody can become God. But we can become like Him.

Q: I would like to know the true story about Jesus.

PR: What do you mean by 'true story of Jesus'? What we know is the true story. Of course, there are some stories which are difficult to believe, which we call miracles. We call things which we are unable to believe 'miracles'. That is all. But some day it might happen to you, and then you will say, "It is no more a miracle because it has happened to me," or "I have seen it happen myself." It is only our own ignorance of what really happened that makes us think that these stories did not happen or that they are not true.

You see, the true story of Jesus is that such a man lived and he became a saint and he taught people everywhere. And finally he was crucified, and they say he died for humanity. So, we should learn to read his teachings, love the man for his sacrifice, and do what he did. You know what he did? And how he became the Christ? By meditation. So, we should meditate. And not worry about whether he really lived or not. They are not interesting questions.

Silence. Sahaj! Okay. Next question. Dylan and Benji! We are in a children's meeting! Order please.

Q: Is there really a heaven?

PR: Well, many people say... It is not some place up there, you know. It is a state of existence. When we exist in a particular way we say, "This is heaven." When we are sick and miserable we say, "This is hell." Philosophers say heaven and hell are all here. So it is wrong to think that heaven is a certain place and hell is a certain place — it is not like that. We create hell or heaven by the way we live. So for each person it is possible to have a heaven or a hell personally for himself or herself.

Q: It there really a devil?

PR: What do you think?

Q: No.

PR: Do you think there is a devil? No. I think so, too! I mean, there does not have to be a devil. I think these are stories taught to frighten us so that we do not do wrong things. But in spirituality, we believe that we should not frighten people into doing right, but teach them how to do right, persuade them how to do right. Well, next question.

Q: How could God have always been here when there must have been a start?

PR: Yes, it is a good question. You know, when you think of time as beginning somewhere and ending somewhere, it has a beginning and an end. But suppose you have the Earth, you know, on which you are living — it is a ball. Can we say it begins somewhere and ends somewhere? You can make any place the point of beginning and any place the point of the end, when you come round to it. Or a circle on the ground — where does it begin and where does it end? If you want to run round the circle and you say, "Well, the circle will begin here and we have to run round three times," this also becomes the end of the circle. So when things are straight there is a beginning and there is an end which are not the same. But when it is a circle, there need not be a beginning or an end. And then God can be above, you see, in a certain way, and everything is for Him the beginning and the end. Okay, next question.

Q: I want to know how to meditate. I try but I cannot.

PR: In Sahaj Marg, we do not like kids to meditate before they are eighteen. In special cases we allow at sixteen. Because children must be mature enough to know what they are doing and why they want to do it. So, that is why we do not like children to do it. There is another thing: you should not go too much into meditation and neglect your studies and your games, you know. Children have to grow up with good bodies and good minds! Then they become fit for meditation. My

Master used to say, "We want people who can be like soldiers." Next question.

Q: Are you one with God yet?

PR: I am sorry to say, "No." Also, it is not my goal. My goal is to be one with my Master, because Babuji has said, "If your Master is one with God, and you are one with your Master, then it is the same as being one with God." You know, if you are with your mother, and your mother is with your father, you are also with your father! So, I prefer to be one with my Master. Next question.

Q: Are there more gods above God?

PR: You know, by definition, God can be only one, because God is defined as the ultimate principle of existence. He is infinite. He is for all time. There cannot be two such persons, or two such entities, or two such principles. Those of you who are old enough to study mathematics know there is only one infinity. You cannot have two infinities.

Next question. This is rather a tricky one.

Q: Do you think people have to wait until marriage to make love?

PR: Yes. Because, you should have, I mean, making love should be a... what shall I say, the coming to fruition of the process of love. You know, like when you cook rice, rice becomes soft when it is cooked. Can you start with soft rice and cook it? It will become like glue. So, making love is an expression of your total love for another person. If it is... if you do it before that, it is only a physical thing and it really loses its value. When two people love each other very much, totally, and it is an expression of their love for each other, then it is right. Otherwise it is exploitation and indulgence in pleasure, so it is not good. Next question.

Q: Is there ever going to be peace again? Will there be another war?

PR: Well, at the moment we have peace of sorts. There are places where there is a little war here and there, but not war as we understand it. I hope there will not be another war. But, as my Master has said, "It depends upon us." See, war is not something which God brings down on us. But if people behave senselessly, stupidly, and want to grab each other's territories and each other's property and wealth, then we have war. Please remember, it is people who create wars. And you are all going to grow up into good citizens who must be able to control the destiny of your country. Next question.

Q: Do you know who wrote this?

PR: I do not know, because if I had received a letter earlier than this I would have known the handwriting, but I think this is the first time I get this one. But I have a suspicion. Okay.

Q: Am I an abhyasi?

PR: I think not. Next question.

Q: Do you ever know what we are thinking?

PR: [chuckles] It is not polite to pry into other people's minds. You know, like in a good society you do not peep through your neighbour's windows and see what is going on inside. As we say, "It is not done." Similarly, we are not allowed to look into your minds, but when my work needs it, it can become possible.

That is all the English questions I have. Now we go to the French.

Q: How does the moon eclipse, the sun eclipse?

PR: Well, I need paper and pencil to explain this. You see, we have three objects. We have the sun, the moon, and the earth. For example, we are sitting here. All look at that side. You have right in front that big car, the Lincoln, and next to that, another car which you can hardly see. You can say the Lincoln is eclipsing the other car. And if that car were in front, because it is a smaller one, you can say that car is eclipsing the Lincoln. Now, what happens in, let us say, the eclipse of the moon: you have the sun here, you have the earth here, and you have the moon here. Now, you know the moon has no light of its own; it reflects the light of the sun. When this earth, the sun, and the moon are in one line, which can happen only in full moon, and when the earth comes exactly in the centre of that line, it is blocking the rays of the sun from falling on the moon. In another way, you say it is the shadow of the earth falling on the moon. This is the eclipse of the moon. When the moon is between the earth and the sun, what happens is as the moon comes between and obstructs the sun from our eyes, so the sun seems to be blocked out. That is an eclipse of the sun by the moon. Now, sometimes they are not in exactly in the same line altogether. And then you find the earth is just coming like this and going away. Then you have a partial eclipse. Next question.

Q: What is God?

PR: This I already answered in English.

Q: Why does Israel make war?

PR: We do not discuss politics here.

Q: How is it in India?

PR: How is it in India? Oh, India is a wonderful country! A little dirty, very hot, sometimes very dusty, lots of flies in the daytime, lots of mosquitoes at night most of the year. But if you can forget these things it is a lovely place. I hope all of you will come and visit us once, when you are old enough to appreciate the reality of things, and not be just led away by beautiful parks and trees and lakes, you know. Okay. Next.

Q: I would like to know what you think of *Star Wars*?

PR: Oh, it is a story. It is a fictional story written by somebody, made into a movie which is enormously nice. I enjoy seeing it myself!

Q: There is two *Star Wars*, one is the movie and one is the national defence system.

PR: Oh, you mean that one!

Q: That might have been what they meant.

PR: Is that what the child meant? I do not know. Well, if it is the national defence system, then I consider it to be very bad. You must ask me why I say this. There is an old saying by wise men, that when we are defensive it shows we are afraid. And we should not be afraid. It does not mean we should not have defences, but it should be like the skin on the body. You know, Micah, the skin is the body's defence. This is not really the Micah, or whatever it is, or the Chari, you know? It is like the balloon which holds the air inside. But we enjoy the balloon and look at its beautiful colours and forget that without the air inside, it would only be another bit of rubber.

A person or a country should be known by the wisdom and by the right living of its people. When we are defensive it means that we are afraid, and then it is rather ridiculous to say we are a great country.

Secondly, you know some people carry a gun, they say, because they need it to defend themselves. Well, somebody stronger comes along, pulls your gun out of your pocket and shoots you dead with your own gun. So, it is better not to have these things for our defence, because it provokes somebody who is more powerful to attack. Now to prevent that, you become more strong. Let us say you buy a machine gun. The other guy comes at you with a bazooka. So, there is no end. This is what we call the escalation of the arms race in this world. When you think over it, it is really crazy, because with all that money you could have built better houses, better roads, better schools, better hospitals. Now we are only breeding more and more fear. So, if it is that Star Wars, it is very bad for us. Next question.

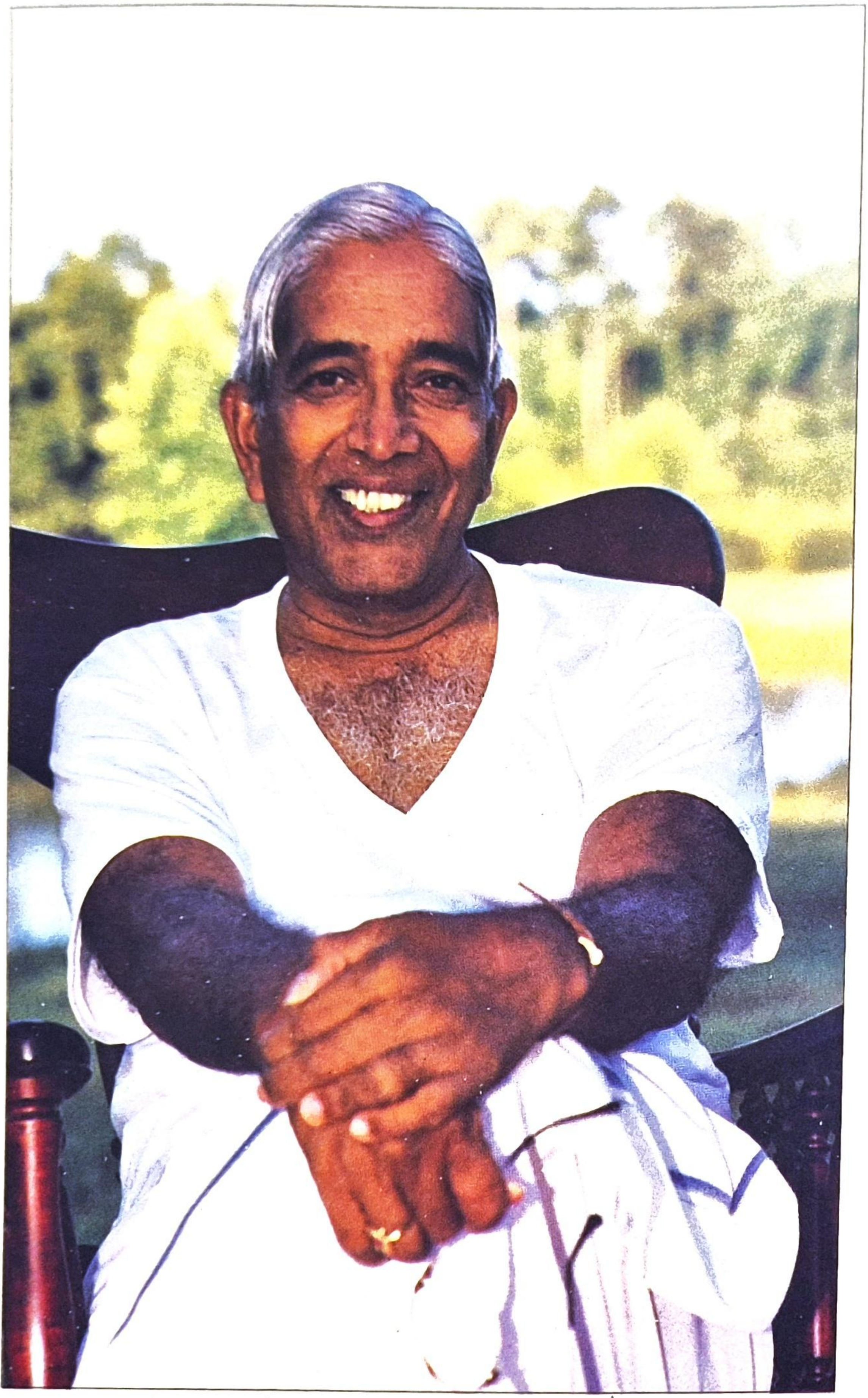
Q: How is a snake's life?

PR: Oh, we must ask a snake that! [laughs] [laughter] But I suppose it likes its own life like we like our life. You know, like a dog lives happily if it is in a good home, and cats have good lives. In America they live excellent lives. They get special dog food, cat food, this, that, and the other. And they have a lot of time on the television commercials, which you and I cannot get! [laughter] So, I think it has a good life. A snake's life, for a snake, must be good. We must not judge the life of another person by what we think of our life or what we think he is thinking or expressing. For instance, we say in English, "It's a dog's life." But you know how many dogs live better lives than the men who keep them? Now the trouble is, we try to imagine what it would be for us if we were a dog or a cat or a snake. If there is an intelligent snake, it must be wondering what a human life is like!

That is all? I hope we will, with your permission, print these questions and answers, without telling who wrote these questions, in *Constant Remembrance*, because we want them to be useful to kids everywhere. Okay? Do you like the idea?

I suggest now you do one thing, all you bigger kids at least. Start writing small articles for the magazine — *Sahaj Shishu, Constant Remembrance* also. Will you try? Micah, and all of you. Try small things first. For instance, you can start writing about this seminar here. Each one of you write in your own way what you feel about it, whether it helped you or not, whether it helped your parents or not, what you think of spirituality, you know? Put it down on paper, as you would like to say it to somebody you love very much and in whom you have confidence.

Jacky, the sweets. Yes, now I would like Micah and you, two of you come here please, and make sure everybody gets something to eat. Okay? Kids first, then the elders. For the time being, I am a kid. [laughter]



14

ADDRESS TO USA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

West Point, Georgia, USA
13 August, 1989

I do not have too much to say as far as this annual meeting is concerned. I am happy to see that you are very businesslike. America is known for its corporate strengths. Of course, inevitably with strengths go weaknesses, and I only hope we have been pruning out the weaknesses and keeping the strengths.

It is our intention to always keep our members well informed of what is going on, and in that spirit I welcome all of you to go into these things further if any of you are interested — into the plans of the ashram, into the finances of the Mission — in a creative spirit, that wherever there are wants being felt you will step in to fulfil those wants. For instance, if money is lacking it should be a creative endeavour to somehow raise that money, rather than criticize the fact that we have no money. There are people here who can perhaps not contribute personally but who can help in raising funds.

So, that sort of attitude, if you have, how to help the Mission and therefore to help ourselves — that should be the attitude. We are always open to criticism. By criticism I mean comment, constructive criticism, how to improve things. Not to go on harping on what is lacking, because there is always something lacking. Babuji Maharaj has said so many times, "In this world you will not find perfection, but we have to aim for perfection in everything that we do." I find in the American temperament a rather unnecessary attitude to dwell on details rather than on the general picture that must emerge out of our endeavours.

My concern is now with the ashram, because I remember in Babuji's time, when we started the ashram in Shahjahanpur, he was always concerned that it would stop halfway and people would laugh at him and at his Mission. He was also always saying, "Why did I ever start this?" Because, you know, it was a massive thing when we started it. It was small, but it became massiver and massiver, and his concern and worry were becoming more and more massive. Any ordinary man would have run away from that position. His concern was not about the ashram being completed for his sake, but anything which we cannot complete is a sign of our incompetence, you see, and faulty planning, lack of proper appraisals of the situation, inability to muster necessary resources. It is like a man who does not know how to swim stepping into the Atlantic — he is drowned within three paces.

So, my concern is to see this ashram completed, and I hope all of you will co-operate. There has been some voicing of an opinion that all have not been consulted, but I differ. We have consulted all of you in several ways, but again I would request you to make your suggestions at the proper time, not when everything is over.

I remember when our ashram in Shahjahanpur was completed and I was taking Babuji around on an inspection tour. Some abhyasis came and criticized various things. Babuji said to all of them the same thing: "It is a pity I did not consult you earlier." That was in his humility. What he really meant was, "Where were you when this was being done?" When everything has been completed and the next morning it is going to be inaugurated, people come and criticize the number of windows, the quality of the wood on the doors, the marble on the floor — it is crazy.

Here, too, the American temperament is not able to assess the wholeness of what we need. I find people coming to me with piecemeal suggestions. One day about doors, one day about windows, next day about hinges, third day about bars, fourth day about I do not know, windmills to be hung here and there. Please think over what you want to be done, how you would like it to be done, and give us a sort of a gestalt, you see. This is how it must be done. Somebody's worried about sinks, somebody about taps, third about boilers. Why don't you all sit down and put your ideas together?

I have also heard some of our sisters being concerned that their requirements are to be ignored, or being ignored, or are likely to be ignored. I do not know how they have any special requirements than what the men have. It is all the same requirements. We all eat, we have to sleep, we use the toilet, we have a shower. Some of them are worried about the kitchen. The kitchen is not exclusively a female province. We are also concerned with it. Your cafeteria bears the name Nala. Nala was one the great emperors of the Indian, whatever you call it, the hierarchy of emperors, but he was also supposed to be the greatest cook on Earth.

So you see, the Indian tradition asks cooks about how kitchens should be, not necessarily women or men, but people who are going to use the kitchens. So, there is no special right or authority vested in women where kitchens are concerned, unless they are doing the cooking. If they are doing the cooking, please suggest. Put it on a slip of paper and hand it in. I suggest to Bill that we should have a suggestion box for the ashram where people should put it in writing with their names, sign it, and put it in the box. We shall consider all suggestions, without exception. We have been to the site once; we are going again on Monday. Please go over the plans tomorrow, please examine the site on Monday, instead of just making vague assertions that this should be in the north and this should be in the south; if this is not, this cannot possibly be the south.

So, please take things more seriously. A flippant attitude to construction is very troublesome, but more troublesome, it can be more expensive. Right from the start we can make changes, but once you build you cannot change so easily. All of you know this.

So, what else have I to say except that it is your ashram you are building. Do not treat it as somebody else's ashram. It is your ashram, whether you are French or German or Italian or American. It is an international ashram. The ashram we have in Europe is a European ashram. It is the European headquarters of the Mission. Similarly, this should be the North American headquarters of the Mission.

I am also happy that already there is the idea of a second ashram in upstate New York in the Catskills. It has been rather a Rip Van Winkle-ian adventure, in that over the last ten years it has gone to sleep, because this proposal we discussed long ago. There have been some minor misunderstandings and lack of rapport between the people concerned. But today Dave and Sheri have come out openly with their statement of intent. I think I express the gratitude of all of you to our dear brother and sister there, that this land will be available for a future ashram of the Mission. I wish to assure Dave and Sheri that it will not be our intention to sell land. We are not in the real estate business. It is our intention to have an ashram eventually there as we will eventually have, I hope, one in the state of Washington and perhaps one in southern California somewhere, you see — four corners of the United States.

These are broad objectives, but remember that the main objective is spiritual evolution of each one of you individually. All these facilities are being provided, or sought to be provided, only towards maintaining your permanent fixation to that goal of spiritual growth, spiritual evolution, liberation, realisation, merger with the Ultimate. We are not designing five-star hotels or comfortable residences or luxury homes. Let us not be diverted away by this American trend toward luxury homes.

An ashram is a place where we go into retreat for the good of our soul. I repeat, Babuji Maharaj has said, "Minimum comfort." Not no comfort, but minimum comfort. I request all our planners to bear this in mind. Minimum comfort, minimum comfort, minimum comfort every time. I would like you to put it on your plans so that people do not forget it. I would like it to be a little cold in winter, a little hot in summer, because then we are conscious of our miserable human circumstances which, under the American way of life, you have avoided successfully in concealing even to yourself, so much so that the least exposure puts you into the arms of a psychiatrist!

It is good to be in tune with nature, simple and in tune with nature. This is one of the, shall we say, fundamental foundations of the Sahaj Marg system. Be simple and in tune with nature. Simple equipment, simple rooms to sleep in, simple everything, you see, good, simple, nourishing food.

So, I do not want the American mind to go away into the byways of luxury and ostentation, and you know, facade, stucco. I do not know what they really mean, but we have to keep it simple. I remember when Babuji's cottage was built, I think I remarked this last year, too. It is a beautiful cottage, but privately Babuji told me that he was not too happy with it because it did not match the simplicity of the main building. People wanted to install an air conditioner for him, I mean, they could have installed a thousand air conditioners. There are so many willing loving hearts who are prepared to sacrifice anything for his sake. He said, "No, no air conditioners." So, if he does not want an air conditioner, we have no business to have an air conditioner ourselves. He needed it.

We do not need it. For him it was a necessity, for us it is a luxury.

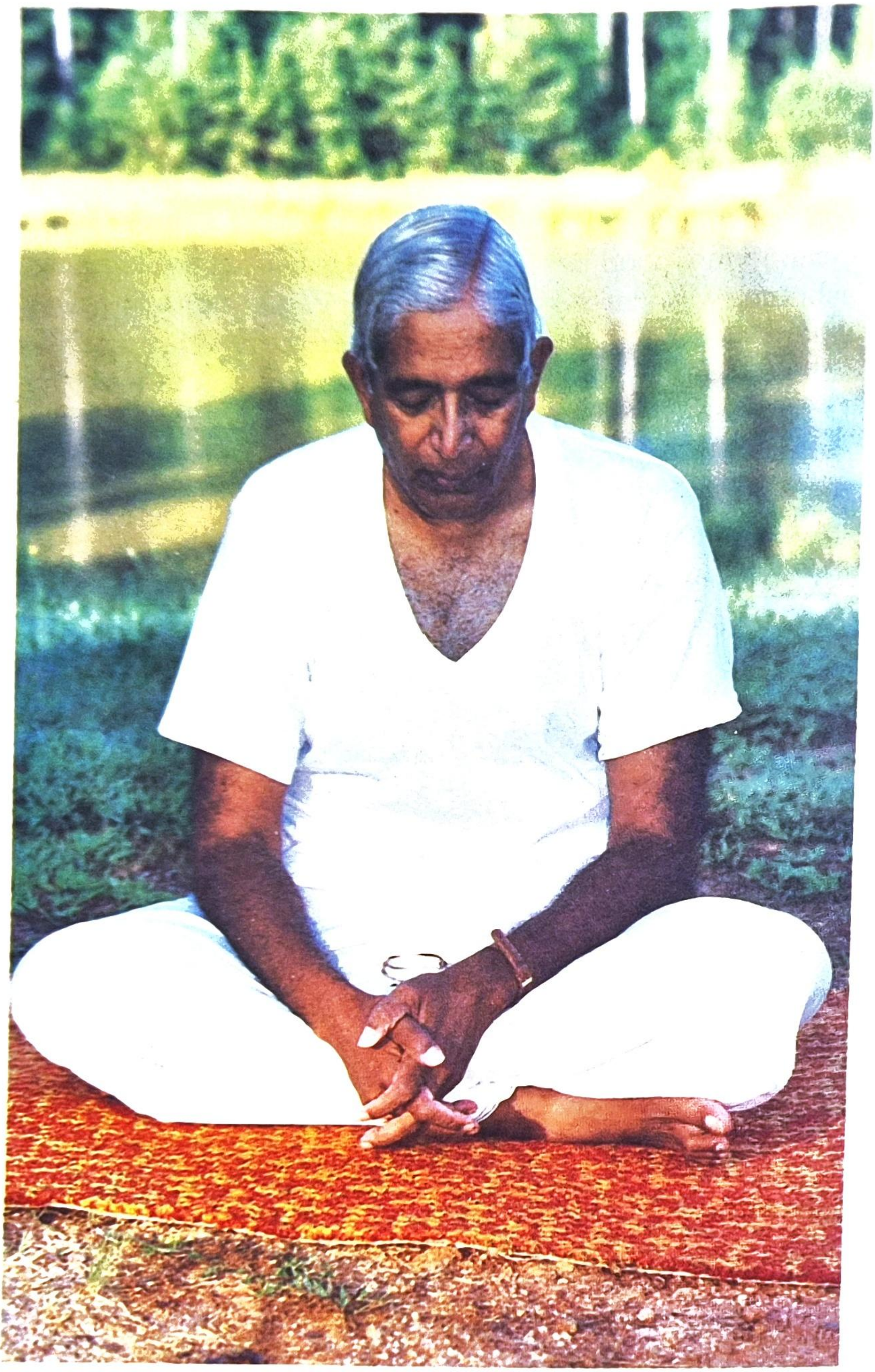
So you see, when the Master is prepared to deal with his teachings and set an example for us to follow, it would be very bad if we cannot follow even this small example in physical living circumstances. I believe that all this four hundred thousand dollars which you are thinking of, quite a part of it could be saved if you stick to simplicity of construction, simplicity of design, simplicity of furniture, everything simple. It does not mean we go into the back woods and live like bears, though I have nothing against that, too.

I have often remarked that this great Mr. Thoreau only lived by a pond in a wooden log cabin, and so much fuss has been made about *Walden*, which he wrote. It shows that even in those days when America was not such a luxurious place, living in nature by the side of a pond in a self-built log cabin was something already strange to the American way of life. Otherwise, I do not see the fuss that is made about that Mr. Thoreau. Every mendicant *sannyasi* in India lives in poorer circumstances. So you see, when we have the tendency to make a big fuss about simple living and a man going into the back woods and living alone for three months and coming out, and everybody gives him a Nobel Prize and an Iron Cross and whatnot, you know — it only shows our estrangement from nature. Not that he has done something great, but we have fallen so low.

So, dear brothers and sisters, please remember this. We have to emulate Him, not only in the spiritual, because the spiritual comes out of this base, you see, like a tree or a plant grows from the soil in which it is placed. Our body is our soil, our senses are the things which give us inputs. If we pervert and corrupt this existence, the physical existence, I dare say the spiritual existence cannot flourish. There may be a little flower, you see — a tree planted in wrong soil will nevertheless have leaves but it may not have fruit. In spirituality we are here after the ultimate fruit, the fruit of existence, such as has never been available to humanity before, if what Babuji Maharaj said is to be accepted. We accept it because we are his disciples.

So, simplicity is not merely a suggestion or a recommendation. I believe it is a necessity. Simple living, clean living, plain living, harmonious living. Let us design our ashrams with these objectives in mind. Let them be places where we do not go to sleep, but rather we are just uncomfortable enough not to be able to sleep so that we can meditate. Let the food be just above, you know, subsistence level so that we do not stuff ourselves and go to sleep and snore in meditation, but we just eat enough to subsist. 'Subsistence for growth' should be the motto of the Mission.

Thank you.



IV

EUROPE

6 to 20 September, 1989
& 28 June to 12 August, 1990

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WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

Grenoble, France
6 September, 1989

Dear friends, in spirituality we speak about realisation, but all the books speak of knowledge, exercises, physical movements, prayer, mantra — the whole lot of things. There has been a great deal of literature and I have been in the beginning very confused about the whole thing, because I found that everything we read and everything we practised applied either to the body or to the mind. Even most of the techniques of yoga were only giving psychic powers or supernatural powers, but not what my Master calls spirituality.

So, to realise what is spirituality I think is the first need. I would like to give you a small example. Coming in my brother Guy Joris's car today there was a short recital or a recitation of some of the phrases of the Gita, one of which says that, like a person throws off his shirts or his dress only to change into new ones, the real self which we call the soul is also changing bodies for new bodies. So, we have to realise which is the real life. Is it the life of the body? Is it the life of the soul? Is it the mental life? What is it that really lives?

I think the first step in realisation is to understand what we have to realise. You all know that there is a great deal of criticism against materialism, the material life. Those who have come to the peak of material achievements here in the Occident, in America, have found that it is of no use. They continue to be miserable, unhappy, sick, and they wonder why. It is precisely because we think the material life, the life of the body, is the real life. And though we have occasional glimmerings of the truth, that there is an inner life, which we have not attended to at all, generally, by and large we tend to ignore this cry from inside for several reasons.

First is that the life of the body is very pleasant — at least we think so — but more and more we realise that, notwithstanding the best and the most expensive and the most nourishing foods, all the modern exercises, the enormous variety of entertainment, the intellectual stimulation offered by books, by drugs, by knowledge, still we are miserable. I do not think there is any need to prove this point. So, there comes a time when we have to listen to the inner call, you see, because the call is there very definitely in everyone's life.

I am very pleased to find that nowadays children want to start meditating. I have even letters from children hardly ten years old, and it is not surprising, because at that age they are still so innocent and they realise the real necessity of an existence in this world. Their innocence makes it possible, their not needing to make a success of a material life makes it possible. The need or the lack of need to, as we say in English, be one with the Jones's. What my neighbour has, I must have. What my next door neighbour has, I must have a little more. All this comes much later.

What I mean is, the life of the competitive ego is not yet manifest in the children. They look to the real needs of the inner self, which is summed up in one word — love. What children want is love. Of course, nowadays we give them a lot of good food, a lot of toys, a lot of entertainment, video games. But, if having all this, they do not have the love from the parents, that life is a wasted life.

So, you see today the disenchantment with the material life, disillusionment in the family. It starts quite early. Broken families, oddly matched parents. All this, the modern phenomenon of a 'free society', so called, only reflects the use of freedom to do something against ourselves, rather than for ourselves. But we have hardly thought of doing anything but blaming society, blaming today's lifestyle, not understanding that change begins for each one with himself or herself. We are waiting for society to change so that we can change, but the fact is, and we all know it in our hearts, that unless we change, society cannot change.

Spirituality is nothing but an effort to change one's self, to try and realise what is the real value of life that we must aspire for. What is life? Is it only this bodily life, starting from birth and ending with death? Because of this idea we suffer, we are afraid of death; we are, therefore, afraid of life itself. In an extreme situation someone commits suicide, which is only a desperate effort to run away from life itself. It is like a person wanting to die before his death comes because he is afraid to die.

So this short *sloka*, as we call it, a couplet in the Gita, which says that as we change our shirts, our dresses when they are dirty, when they are useless, and put on new ones, similarly the soul, in its passage through existence, uses bodies for its journey. It lives in one body, uses it rightly or wrongly, perhaps, I do not know, discards it when it is no longer useful, takes on one more body, and this is going on almost eternally without stop.

Spirituality, the signs of spirituality, says it is that inner continuity of existence which is represented by the soul to which we should pay attention, because we find that there are two entities struggling now. In the average human being there is the ego, the life of the ego, which wants the continuation of the bodily life, the bodily existence, because the ego is working only through the body. Its instruments are the senses, therefore its emphasis is on the sensory life, the sensory existence. Seeing and enjoying with the eyes, smelling and enjoying with the nose, with the sense of touch, with the tongue, the taste, and the music through the ears.

When we make the mistake of identifying our life with this body and the senses, it is the life of the ego that we are promoting, supporting. And, therefore, the inner spiritual life comes down to almost nonexistent levels. It cannot stop altogether, because if it stopped we would not exist. The ego cannot exist without the soul.

So you see, spirituality is nothing wonderful. All the books in Sanskrit and Latin and Greek, and the Islamic Sufi literature in Arabic, the more we read them, the more we are confused. Some few find great pleasure in it. Now, I would rather be confused and throw away those books than find pleasure in it and continue to amass a wealth of knowledge in my head, because knowledge is perhaps even more dangerous than the other sensory pleasures. It seems to have an attraction, a uniqueness, some sort of a *summum bonum* of existence all its own. It is well known that the intellectual arrogance is very subtle but very, very strong. That is why people of knowledge think they know everything.

A mere professor of physics or geometry or history or geography thinks he knows everything in this world. They do not have the humility to realise that they have not even started scratching the surface of their own subjects. Any scientist, or any artist, or any philosopher worth his subject, worth his salt, must acknowledge this. But the danger is that, more than the sensory pleasures which keep pulling us towards the attraction of the senses, this intellect becomes a great bar to our spiritual awakening. The main problem is, when we think we know everything, we block the possibility of further awakening, because it is a well-known fact that one who thinks he knows will not learn.

So, if we are able to accept with humility that even at the pinnacles of, shall we say, academic knowledge, scientific knowledge, we may know a great deal, but we can never know all about what we are studying, then there exists the possibility that such a person can come to the spiritual life. Without that humility spiritual life is impossible. Humility is not something which debases or degrades us, that we have to bow before people and touch their feet. This is a very ignorant idea of humility; it is a very superficial, physical way of showing one's humility. Often it is just hypocrisy. The real humility lies in our own inner realisation that when we face the knowledge of the universe, of the inner universe, the external universe, what we know even as the highest professor in this world is like a grain of sand compared to all the sand of the oceans and the seas.

So, spirituality speaks of the need to be humble in this sense. It tries to say, "Friend, look into yourself. What is it you have really enjoyed?" If you drink all the wine in this world you will not see the end of enjoyment. In fact, the more you drink the less you enjoy. There is a law which operates against more enjoyment the more we take of anything. But in this futile search to find more pleasure in taking more of something, one who seeks it in wine ends up a drunkard with his liver diseased, with his heart diseased, and ultimately ends up in a death which he did not deserve. Another seeks it in money and ends up owning the world but miserable. Same thing with power, with women, with drugs — you name it, it is the same truth — anything. That is why when we reach the material exaltation in any sphere you find the exaltation of misery.

You have your own examples of the great artists who died mad, some of them. Scientists who became crazy, millionaires who committed suicide, beautiful actresses who committed suicide. All of them reached the top in their respected spheres. They found neither happiness nor contentment, but only found it impossible to continue to exist.

This realisation of what is the real life is a very necessary and important realisation. It is no use looking into books, talking to people, listening to gurus and their lectures. It is no use at all. We may find meanings for words in dictionaries, but for the meaning of life we have to look into ourselves. Therefore, the spiritual way says, "Turn inside." It is not that we denigrate the material life, because the material life is necessary. It is in the material life that we have to try and achieve a spiritual existence and, having stepped into the spiritual life, to seek an emancipation which we may call liberation, realisation. Which only means that we must use this material life as a vehicle to take us from this side to that side of existence, like a boat to cross a river, or a car to take me from my home to my workplace.

But the moment we buy an expensive car and start polishing it and plating it with gold and not using it, we come into this craziness, you see, that we have possessions which we never use. Some are too beautiful to be used, some are too expensive to be used. When we make things which we must use more beautiful, more powerful, more valuable than ourselves, the real truth is we are denigrating ourselves progressively against a material existence. We are valuing ourselves less and less every time we value a material thing more and more. That is why, when we do not have the inner confidence that we are something in ourselves, by ourselves, for ourselves, we seek confidence in possessing things, which is only a vicarious transfer of our own importance to other things, of our inner value to something else. It is like a man with a big library in his home, pretending to know all that is contained in those books, but often they are bought to show his ignorance.

So you see, the more importance we give to the material existence — nobody else is denigrating ourselves or reducing our value; we are doing it ourselves. This is the tragedy of a material life. So, spirituality says if you are lame, you need crutches. Why, when you are healthy, do you want to buy crutches? Because they are beautiful, because they are well made, stainless steel, rubber, plastic. One who is self contained within does not need any material props to prove his worth.

So, spirituality does not denigrate the material life. It says be wise, use it in the right way. Achieve the goal of the spiritual life, then you find that this life becomes beautiful, it becomes fulfilled with contentment, it becomes joyous. All these things coming from **inside**.

Now we can say, "Now I am happy." Full stop. Now we say, "I am happy because I have a beautiful wife or I have a big house, or a house with a swimming pool, or I have a Lancia or a Ferrari." Please understand this. The moment we have to say, "I am happy **because...**", it is an acceptance of defeat, notwithstanding all your property, your estates, your books, your horses, your cars. So, we have this ancient wisdom which says be simple, reduce your needs, live not to amass wealth or to become powerful, but to use the material as a vehicle for your spiritual growth, spiritual attainment.

Treat the body as a vehicle. Maintain it sensibly so that it does not fail in the path, but do not maintain it as if it is a racehorse or something like that. The body is not meant to be beautiful or powerful or strong, or any of these things. It must be able to take me through life. Suppose you have a beautiful car and you go on greasing it and polishing it and filling petrol in it. "My lovely car," you know, put the hose in and shush, and because you have a credit card the petrol is going all over. Plainly it would be very silly. Therefore we have tanks with capacity. We have lubrication manuals which say, "Three drops of grease here, six here, nothing there." It does not matter whether it is a cheap car or an expensive car. What in effect it means is, a car is a car. Treat it as a car, maintain it, give it timely attention. Do not neglect it. Then you can be sure you can travel in it without stopping on the way.

It is no surprise that nowadays we hear more and more of heart failure. Nowadays they give it names in Latin and Greek, but it is simple failure of the heart to sustain me through my existence. It is a very beautifully, delicately created instrument, and when you burden it with all the paraphernalia of a physical existence and strain it beyond its manufacturing capacity limit, it cannot but fail.

So you see, the heart is simple. It is meant to have two functions. One, to sustain the physical existence, because all of you know that we can live without hands and feet and legs and arms, but we cannot live without the heart. That is the physical function, pumping blood through the system, purifying it, keeping us alive, but spirituality says it has the higher function — that it is that from which love emanates. If this love is, sort of, solidified into love of the self, it remains in the heart, it is like ice in a rubber balloon, and the heart breaks. We do not realise that in the modern life there is so much heartbreak. Few people realise that it is because we love ourselves too much that our heart breaks. As my Master used to say, "Love cannot kill — not yourself, not somebody else." When we claim that we love somebody so much that, because he does not love me back or she does not love me back, my heart is broken, it is really self-love. I love so that I may be loved. It becomes a transaction. Spirituality says no transactions.

Your heart is made to radiate love, like the sun is radiating light for millions of years, and if the physicists are to be believed, it does not lose anything. It is supposed to be giving out millions of tons of energy every day and yet it is not growing smaller or being depleted, because it gives without expecting to receive back anything. Now if we can create a human heart which will love without seeking to be loved in return, you will have the beginning of a spiritual life.

Spiritual life, therefore, consists in giving without thought of the self. Give as long as you can give. Give as much as you can give. Finally give everything you have. This we call surrender.

So you see, when you come down to the brass tacks of life, spirituality is not something arcane and old and musty, only for those who are going to die or who seek relief from death. It is the only thing which can help us to lead a sane, sensible, evolutionary existence. People often ask, "What is the need for spirituality?" This is the need: if I have to be healthy, strong within myself without seeking arms and atom bombs to show my strength, content within myself without seeking things on which I can support my contentment, happy within myself without need of having to seek happiness from others – what more can we ask for?

We have tried everything else. Today we have tried absolutely everything. Especially in the Occidental societies, we have gone to very high levels of material and scientific and technological achievements. We enjoy standards of living which, even twenty years ago, would have been dreams for us. The most modern hospitals, the best health techniques. If you look at it in a sensible way, we have in the material existence everything that you can possibly ever have to guarantee your healthy, happy life. If, having all this, we continue to be miserable, sick, discontented, disenchanted with life, it is only one further step in our thinking to say, to determine for ourselves, we may have all this but it is not enough. Then, perhaps, we shall look for something other than material life, material satisfaction, material achievement, material growth, and in one stroke of thinking we come to the conclusion which is inescapable: that it is the inner life now in which we must seek all things.

This is what we are trying to do and about which brother Guy Joris has already explained to you. The mechanics are not important, though necessary. We should never make the mistake of confusing a need with its importance. For instance, without breathing we cannot live. It is an absolute need. Nobody realising its importance until we have a heart attack, or something like that, and we have to gasp for the next breath which will ensure our continued existence.

So, with this exaggeration of this material life and its values, we have forgotten that we need simple things like air and water. But in some way we find that all the sickness, disease, misery, is once again focusing our attention to keep air, water, these things pure. It is not enough to have kitchens and toilets spick and span and clean, you see, if the water in our taps and the air that we breathe is polluted. So, we have to go from the particular to the general again. From 'me' to humanity. If all humanity lives, I have a chance of living. I cannot exist by myself. I cannot have pure air for myself alone. In the process of purifying the atmosphere, I purify it for all the people of the world. If you purify the waters of your rivers, it is for all of France. It cannot be only for the people of Grenoble or for the people of Paris.

So, when we come down to the essence and the basics of existence, we find a new opening of the heart, a tendency to embrace all of humanity in our thoughts, a newborn generosity which brings us together as brothers and sisters. No longer isolating ourselves and separating ourselves with our wealth and our knowledge and our powers. And that is only a small benefit. If you can socialize a life which has become individuated very strongly, very sadly, and often very tragically, you will find that even though it is the smallest benefit it can spread light, joy, happiness. And the possibility exists or begins to exist for each one of us to be the source or the centre of such an existence.

Thank you.

16

SPIRITUAL PURPOSE

General Meeting, Pallanza, Italy
15 September, 1989

PR: We should not insist on any payment. We should leave it to them to support an organization which they should feel is theirs. I don't want people to think they are members of a Mission. I want them to think the Mission is theirs. It should be left to each to one, too. We must love the organization and support it, remembering it is ours, because it is helping us to grow. What we need is more abhyasis really, not more money. I hope there will be several hundred abhyasis next year. Italy is a big country.

Abhyasi: She says that spirituality in Italy is just awakening...

PR: I hope it will awaken. We want the people to grow spiritually. It is not a question of how many abhyasis the Mission has. That is a wrong way of looking at it. If you love somebody, you should be interested in that person's spiritual welfare, children, parents, families, friends. Like no mother wants her children to be hungry, and we are trying to fulfil the spiritual hunger of people.

So, please don't think that the Mission must have more abhyasis, but that we must help more people to realise the spiritual purpose and the goal. If you have this attitude then you will find it difficult to speak to other people about spirituality. Especially preceptors should remember this. I find that preceptors become complacent as soon as they become preceptors. Some preceptors, when they get a job or when they get married, they become happy and stop thinking of the spiritual life. It means their goal is not really spiritual but only material. We need material goals, too, but they must be only stepping stones for spiritual progress. Otherwise, it's a waste of time, you see, the whole thing. Please remember this and try to put your heart into your work for yourself and for others. That's all I have to say.

17

WHERE RELIGION ENDS SPIRITUALITY BEGINS

Pallanza, Italy
15 September, 1989

Dear brothers and sisters, it is something of an anti-climax for me to speak after they have told you so many things about Sahaj Marg. I am sorry I could not understand fully what they said, so I may repeat some things that they have already told you about. I only want to emphasize two or three very important aspects of our system.

We have frequently been asked questions about what is the place of religion in spirituality. Many people are agitated about this, rightly. My Master said we are all born in one religion or the other. We have no choice. One who is born a Christian becomes a Christian. One who is born a Hindu becomes a Hindu. Similarly, a Buddhist; similarly all the other religions. And somehow we become superstitiously attached to various concepts. As my Master used to emphasize, we stick to our religions not because we have faith in the gods or god of our religion, but basically because of fear. This is a very common feature. We are afraid of giving up something which we have done without even having any faith in it so far. So, my Master made a very sweeping statement: that we generally stay with our religion because of fear and temptation.

Many people ask us this question: "I am a Buddhist. What will happen if I start meditation?" Another asks the same question, "What about my Christ? What will happen to me if I start meditation? Do I give up my Christ?" And, of course, the Hindus have umpteen gods. The funny thing is, none of them have any gods until they come to spirituality, because even when they pray, which is very rare, it is out of convention or compulsion of society. In my almost thirty years experience with my Master, I did this method of spirituality. Again and again we come across people who have lost the capacity even to pray — this is what they say, not what I say. They come and say, "What shall I do?" When you tell them there is always this appeal to God which we call prayer, they say, "I do not know how to pray."

So, all this talk about God and prayer and temples and churches is only a convention. This is something we must recognize, that we are not trying to interfere with anybody's faith, but spirituality offers a way of spiritual growth and development which goes very far beyond what religions can offer. You must excuse me for making this rather rash statement, but please remember that I, too, belong to a particular religion which claims to be the oldest religion on Earth. Perhaps with justification, perhaps without; it does not matter. The religious texts of Hinduism go back thousands of years. Age may make wine tasty, but not a religion more useful to us than when it was founded. Not everything which ages becomes more effective or more useful.

My Master made a very revolutionary statement, that spirituality begins where religion ends. Religion is the foundation upon which the edifice of spirituality must be built. No great saint was a saint out of religion, but out of spiritual practice. The great founders of religions did not belong to that religion themselves. It would have been impossible, for the simple fact that after them they brought their religions into existence. Buddhism came after Buddha. He was not born a Buddhist.

Like that, you know, I believe that even Christianity — Christ was not a Christian. He was born a Jew but he broke free of the religion of his time, Judaism, to be free — liberated himself. He had the courage and need to do what he thought was right for himself, established contact with the God to call himself the son of God through meditation. This is what theology and dogma says. Buddha meditated, Christ meditated, Mohammed meditated, and they founded great religions. What we say is, what my Master says is, they all broke away from their respective religions into which they were born, because religion was not useful to them.

Remember, Buddha was a Hindu when he was born. He was in a royal family, he was a prince. Mahavira of the Jains was another famous Hindu saint. He was disgusted with the Hindu temple practices and the corrupt practices of the priesthood. So, out of Hinduism and because of the corruption that had crept into the temples and the ritualized worship of those temples, India gave birth to two new religions, two great new religions: the Buddhist and the Jain.

So you see, when religions evolve there is always a branching out from the religion into something new, into something purer, into something cleaner, into something more effective. Therefore, my Master said, “Where religion ends, spirituality begins.” In one sense it can be called rather a tragedy that what Buddha taught became again a religion — Buddhism, because you find again the same ritualized practices, the reading of books, the temples, the bell-ringing and all this paraphernalia of a religious life. We find the same thing in Jainism. It shows how difficult it is to retain the purity of the original saints and their thoughts and their systems, and the way they developed a contact with the Divinity.

So, even though out of religion they have evolved a spiritual structure, unfortunately for human beings it again sort of solidifies, petrifies into another religion, and the purity, the transcendental purity of the system that they evolved for themselves and for us, becomes again solidified into another religion. So, we find this transition from religion to spirituality, back into another religion to spirituality, back into another religion, which is rather delaying our progress.

It is, therefore, necessary to keep spirituality, when it comes in a pure state, free of rituals, free of mantras that we have in Hinduism, for instance, free of poses. This is precisely what my Master and his Master before him did: cut away everything that is unnecessary to bring back again a pure practice, non-ritualistic in nature, independent of any individual named God of today, going back to that old tradition, that God can have no name, no form, no attributes; trying to emphasize the fact that religions have always divided human beings; seeking to bring back a unity among human beings by cutting away these names and symbols and forms of worship, so that eventually we can have a human race which may be politically or geographically divided, but not spiritually divided. If we are able to achieve that as human beings, the smallest benefit that will accrue to humanity will be that geography and history can no longer divide us, and there will arise the possibility of a human race with a common goal, with a common purpose, with a common aspiration to achieve what we call divinisation.

Buddhahood may mean the same thing, you see, achieving the state of a Buddha which you call Buddhahood, like knighthood, kingship. But when we talk of Buddhahood, we speak of the Buddhist religion, and therefore it is something only for the Buddhists. When we talk of Christhood or the Christ consciousness, or the Christ spirit, the same unfortunate tendency comes, that it is only for Christians. We must be baptized; we must go to church, etc. The same thing when we take a religiously-oriented figure or name or God.

As my Master said, "Everybody agrees that there can be only one God." There can be no doubt or dispute about this, but each religion says, "My God is the right one and not yours." How great minds, enlightened minds, educated minds can come and have this sort of disputation that, "Your God is silly and stupid. My God alone is true," nobody can understand. My Master said, so long as we stay in religion, which he called the kindergarten of spiritual life, this sort of divisiveness, divisive tendency cannot be stopped.

So real human unity, a unity of the human race, can arrive only when we evolve further into a spiritual life where there is no more division, where there is no more Buddhahood, or Islamhood, or Christhood, but divinisation. Where there is only God without a name, without a form, without attributes, the ultimate truth, the ultimate essence, and which condition we aspire to achieve through meditation. Therefore, he repeated again and again, "Where religion ends, spirituality begins."

So, it is not that we have any disrespect, it is not that there is anything wrong with religion nor, you see, I am a Hindu, you are Christian, there may be a Muslim, there may be a Buddhist here. It does not matter. We are what we are because we are born into that. But, as Swami Vivekananda of India said, I quote, "It is good to be born in a religion, but bad to die in a religion." These thoughts, you see, it is not that you are going to immediately think over this and accept this, or anything of that sort. It would be too easy, too facile, but these are some seed thoughts over which you would do well to ponder.

As we are trying, in a sense, in our social life to bring about an equalization among human beings, equalization of opportunity, equalization of achievement, though by and large societies have achieved this only by robbing the rich to pay the poor. Temporarily effective, but certainly not a wise way of doing things. We should try to raise the poor to the level of the rich, not reduce the level of the rich to the level of the poor. We are only trying in spirituality to achieve a oneness of human beings where, whatever else may divide them, at least God should not divide them.

My Master made once a very telling statement, an effective statement, that during the several wars which have plagued this world of ours, people everywhere are praying for victory. In the Second World War the people of England were praying for English victory, Germans praying for their victory, the Italians praying for their victory. All praying to the same God, our Father in Heaven. My Master said, "Now, whose prayer will God answer?" He said, "You know, this is a quarrel. If God thinks, he would only say, 'They are **all** my children." This is a petty quarrel among themselves, like children are quarrelling at home. And certainly one child, if it prays to the mother, "Please shoot my brother because he is troubling me," the mother is not going to oblige. She will say, "You are all my children. Learn to live together in harmony, in peace."

This is the message also of spirituality that, for heaven's sake, do not let God divide you by having some funny ideas about religions, and this being better than that and that being better than this. God is the cause of this universe. He cannot be trapped into any particular religion. He cannot be the property of any particular religion. He cannot be owned or possessed by anybody. If He is absolute, if He is everywhere at all times, He belongs to every one of us. He is the birthright of every single thing in this universe and, as the eminent deity, He is in the heart of every one of us. Spirituality only says, look for Him here.

Therefore, as my sister Enrica and my brothers have explained to you, we meditate on the heart, imagining the divine presence in the heart. No name, no form, because they limit our idea of God, but on the absolute, ultimate, formless, nameless, attribute-less presence, without which we could not exist. This is the message of spirituality, and I personally believe it has a great relevance to present day life. It was always relevant; otherwise there would not have been the reformations in religions which we have read about in our history books. There has been periodical reformation in every religion that you can think of.

In Hinduism we have the famous statement of Lord Krishna: "With the passage of time everything tends towards corruption, towards decay, towards hardening, towards petrifaction, and again and again a personality is born to revive, to revivify this original spiritual essence of that religion." Therefore, tradition always speaks of past prophets, future prophets, but never of different Gods. Prophets may change but God never changes. Prophets have names. God has no name. Prophets have nationalities and languages. God has no nationality and no language. Prophets speak with the tongue of various peoples. God does not speak at all. He speaks only in silence, as my Master has said. Therefore, we are taught to seek a union with our Creator who is within, through silence, through meditation, through what you call contemplation.

It is late, but I request you all to, we are going to have a meditation now. I invite you all to participate, remembering that whatever you are, whoever you are, the God within you is the same as the God within me, and it is with that God that we are seeking to re-establish a lost contact. If you wish, we may meditate for about twenty minutes, just now. We close our eyes, sit comfortably and, relying upon the divine presence in our heart, try to feel its presence, His presence. Because I wish to place before you the final truth of spirituality, as taught to me by my Master, that while God cannot be seen or touched, His presence can be felt. And it is to that endeavour that we are applying our efforts.

Thank you.

(Talk given at open house.)

18

TURN FROM OUTWARDS INWARDS

Cugy, Italy
17 September, 1989

When we speak about spirituality, we are compelled to speak of the external and internal, the exterior and interior. But really there is no exterior and interior. It is only a convention, because I do not want people to think that physically we have to go inside or some such thing. A thought, yes, but there is no going from somewhere to somewhere. The closest I can come is saying that we go from ourselves into ourselves.

In another way, we can say we are now looking outward through the senses. In spirituality, we try to go inwards with the senses, and here is the great secret: because the senses cannot help us, we abandon the senses without a second thought. It is not a conscious thing. It is like a carpenter who takes different tools for different work. You cannot say he is renouncing this tool in favour of another tool. I find this idea of renunciation is a very troublesome idea for almost all people. It is like a telephone. We use it because it helps us to speak to somebody who is very far away. It does not mean that I renounce my voice or I renounce personal communication.

Therefore, when we are able to accept the need to turn inwards, this wonderful thing happens, which my Master has spoken about again and again, that the senses lose their control over us, which they have now in a very, very wrong way. This truth my Master put in a very short form. He said, "Turn from here to here and there is everything that you have to realise."

So this external, internal, you know, out of the need to express something we have to speak of them. It is a very regrettable need, but please do not understand that there is a real internal, because then people start asking questions. "But I go into my heart. How to go into my heart?"

It is all with the power of thought that we achieve this transition, I would say — not journeys, but transitions. I wanted to clarify this because very often I find our speakers, and myself talking of the need to go inwards into the inner self. But I am finding it limits our approach.

The second thing is this presence of divine light in the heart. Which divine light? How does it look? What does it illuminate? Because people want to see the light in the heart, even though we tell them, "Do not look for light or try to imagine light or see light." Here I would like to make a little additional statement. The real way is to imagine that God is in the heart and, because he has no form and name, we have a supposed illumination emanating from Him, which is only to focus our mind on an object — which is really not an object. It is the need of the untrained mind to have something to hold to, and we think this is the subtlest way of doing it.

So, please remember this heart. Yes, it is very important, of course — without it we would not live — but even with human love this heart has nothing much to do except that sometimes it beats faster than it should, you see, and makes the blood flow faster and young girls blush. It is only the flow of blood.

So, even though we say 'my heart' and 'my sweetheart', all these things, the reference is to something else — it is to the spiritual heart, which is supposed to be on the right-hand side. My Master does not call it that, but some spiritual systems of India have this idea that the spiritual heart is on the right side. But my Master has very definitely stated that the seat of the soul is here in the right side, and therefore it is most important, it is vital to even our worldly existence, to divert our attention away from the outside towards this heart. Even real love becomes only possible after that.

We all know that all that we talk of love now, and 'we enjoy love', this is all trash. I do not believe anybody here knows what real love is, excuse me, precisely because we do not know where the heart is, even though we go on our knees before some girl and say, "Oh, my heart, take my heart," and all this sort of thing. I am anxious that the same mistake we should not make when we go towards Divinity, or the Self inside us which we call Divinity. Therefore, like this house — suppose it is my house. When I am inside the house I am at home, when I am outside the house here also I am at home. I go inside when I need to rest, when I need to sleep, when I need to study, otherwise there is no difference between the outside of my house and the inside of my house.

So, for a spiritually elevated person there is no such thing as the inner self and the outer self. In fact, as long as this idea exists that there are two selves, we are still slaves to the duality of the mind.

I have been feeling that I should speak about this a little to clear whatever ideas you may have: that you have to go inside, there is some light, there is a heart, inside it is a citadel of spirituality. All nonsense! The only need is to turn the attention of the senses from outwards inwards. If you are able to do that, in that moment spiritual life begins. Then it is Master's business. He takes over.

I regret very much the need to technicalize our subject. The subject does not need it; the object does not need it, too. All that we have to do is to go, in an attempt to turn the sensory apparatus inward, only to realise that they are useless for that job. Instantly they lose their importance for us and the outer world gets cut, not because we renounce, but because we are now in a different search altogether. Now there is no problem with, you know, giving up things. We are not giving up anything. When I close my eyes to go to sleep, I am not giving up this world, so why on earth should I have to give up the world when I close my eyes in meditation? Now they become instruments to be used at my will, at my pleasure. For the outer world they are very good. It is like anybody here who has got a powerful pair of Zeiss binoculars. Most often they are in the case. I do not know if any one of you uses a binocular even once a year. Most of us have gimmicks and things like that we keep polished to be used when necessary. Spirituality only says these are also to be used when necessary, and if you are keeping them always focused outwards it is a mistake, it is wrong, it is against your evolution.

So you see, spirituality is very simple in its essence, but unfortunately we complicate it a bit when we speak about it. My Master used to say, "If you want to know what is an apple, just bite it." But the man who does not want to bite, but reads about it in the *Encyclopaedia Universalis* and the *Britannica*, you know, he will read pages and pages about it but not know anything about it.

So, spirituality depends for verification on direct experience, not on knowledge. I would like to submit that all the vast knowledge of the Occident has been acquired like that — by directed sensory perception. In Sahaj Marg we are only directed, you know, like you focus and look.

Thank you.

(Talk given after open house.)

19

REMEMBRANCE

Cugy, Italy

18 September, 1989

Answers waiting to be given, for which the people who are to ask the questions have not come yet! As no less a person than Einstein said, “It is not so important to know the right answers, as to know the right questions to ask.”

Often, sympathy does more harm than good. Sympathy does not help. It is my observation. Well, I am happy because, perhaps the French do not have sympathy. But you know, to be serious about it, when you receive some sympathy, what it does is to remind you of all the occasions when you did not get any sympathy, and it deepens the sense of hurt. I am not saying we should not have sympathy in the heart, but as Babuji used to say, “Love in the heart, stick in the hand.” Otherwise we just weep and make the sick person a little sicker, imagining the sickness, and when we go away they continue to be sick. So, we must always have love in the heart. Why only when somebody is sick? We should always sympathize with people. Why only when they have a headache or a stomachache? The very fact that we have sympathy on one occasion means we did not have sympathy on other occasions, so instead of helping it only makes the situation worse.

The second thing I have found is that people act, show sympathy, more out of a sense of guilt than out of any real feeling in the heart. So sympathy becomes an emotion rather that a feeling. Sahaj Marg says feeling, but no emotion. The real emotions are false, so let us have feeling for each other. In fact, as the Christian tradition says, charity begins at home. Unfortunately, people use this to avoid giving donations. It does not mean charity in terms of money or physical goods. It means be charitable to yourself; then you can be charitable with others.

I find that one who cannot forgive himself cannot forgive anybody else for anything. We should certainly have high ideals for ourselves, but not to the extent that we cannot forgive ourselves for our own sins of commission and omission. One who cannot forgive himself is useless to this world. I do not think even God can forgive somebody who has not forgiven himself. So, in this sense, charity begins at home.

The great tyrants have been people who could not forgive themselves for their stupid mistakes, small sins. And the law of survival will not permit you to punish yourself, so you work all this frenzy on other people. It is very bad. So we have to learn to love ourselves, not in the vulgar sense, but I must look upon myself as a creation of my Master, and I must look at it with wonder, what my Master has made of me. Then this wonder will be reflected when I look at you and see what the Master is similarly doing for everybody else.

There is the old story of a cup which is half full. The pessimist says it is half empty and the optimist says it is half full. We must always look to the brighter side of ourselves, because this is a spiritual truth, that when we look to the bad things they become reinforced. This is the most fundamental teaching of my Master. Avoid negative thinking. It also means avoid negative thinking about yourself. So this is the importance.

This is something for psychologists. We have a couple of them here. I am always a little unhappy to find a psychologist dealing psychological assistance. "Oh, I have been analyzed." What on earth for? It is like a beautiful car, a Mercedes Benz, being dragged by another car on the street. I can't accept any explanation that psychologists would give, whether Indian, Freudian — anything, I don't care. When that which pulls has to be pulled, it means the puller has failed, and he cannot afford to fail. Not for ourselves, but for those for whom we have accepted responsibility.

Therefore, I tell people like this youngster, day before yesterday evening he was handing over the books to Stella because he was too sick to continue with the work. He would not come there, he would not go there, etc. I had to be a little rough with him. Look at the result. [laughter] It is remarkable that he should be here. I saw him just now. I mean, we all know about him.

You see, it is said that when the sun sets it still leaves its warmth behind. So valuable things are valuable when they are present. Also when they are absent. You have flowers in the room, and the whole place is flooded even after they remove the flowers. Also fish, you keep a basket of fish, the house… [laughter]

So, I think the physical presence is only necessary to establish a non-physical presence, and the more this can be done, the greater that thing or person. And the more subtle it is, the longer it lasts. For instance, if you have the fragrance of flowers, you open the windows, the air is let in and the fragrance goes. But the love of a person is remembered. What is remembrance but the bringing into the present of something which was.

So, one who can create such memories that his name is remembered for thousands of years, whether it is Christ or

Buddha, Mohammed, that is their greatness. They are physically absent, but very much present even today. Now we want to be affected when we are present. This is a fault in Occidental training. It is a serious fault. It gives or it puts enormous importance on physical presence. Everybody feels they have to be somewhere, to meet somewhere, to speak with someone, and the more they are present the more they are effective. It is, to me, a very stupid training, because I feel that the less you are present physically, and the more you can achieve in that way, such a person is truly important, truly effective. We should try to become like that. And how can you develop this unless you develop your inner values? That the flower is gone but the fragrance remains. This is what we should achieve.

(Informal talk.)

20

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

La Sorbonne University, Paris, France
20 September, 1989

Good evening and welcome to this small meeting of ours. I am sorry that I cannot speak to you in French, and I don't think for many years it will be possible either, because to learn a language takes as long as it takes to practise yoga, for instance. So, if we meet in future, as I hope we shall do, I seek your indulgence right from now to speak in a foreign language. I come from India, which is a land of many languages. You all know that we have something like thirty major languages and several hundred dialects. Even in India I cannot speak to other audiences in the north of India, for instance, except through the medium of English, and it is not different here in Europe. But I am trying to learn a few words in French and *un petite*. In future I may be able to speak a few words.

To come to the subject of our evening's talk. We call India the mother India, the *Bharat Mata*. That is *Bharat*, the great mother for us. It is not to be confused with saying that it is my motherland. It is not in that sense. India is considered the mother of a whole culture, a race, a civilization, and she has been a very fecund mother. Through the vast centuries through which we have evolved, she has given birth to many cultures, many traditions, many systems of yoga, and has been the mother of three great religions. The main one, of course, is Hinduism, which is wrongly called Hinduism. It is essentially to be called the *sanatana dharma*, the eternal dharma. And, of course, Buddhism and Jainism, all considered to be great religions of this world.

When we come to yoga and the way of spiritual life, I can say there have been systems innumerable, and it is often difficult to find out what we should do, how we should do it, and with whom we should do it. Because, under the tradition in India, there is the need for a system, there is the need for a Master who can guide us through the various mazes of that system. It is a deeply rooted teaching, an idea in the mind of the Hindu, that spiritual life is impossible without a guru. In this, all traditions are agreed. In fact, they go to the extent of saying that guru is God himself.

I am sure most of you would be familiar with that famous Sanskrit statement, *"Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwarah,"* which means, which in English is "Guru is the creator Brahma, Guru is the protector Vishnu, Guru is the destroyer Shiva." Not being satisfied with that, it goes on to say, *"Guru Sakshat Parabrahma,"* which means that the Guru is the Ultimate itself, and therefore we respect him, we adore him in this way. So, we have this great need for a Master and a method.

Now, it is rather a difficult situation when we find many systems which are practised by reading the books, because again, referring to the old tradition, everything has to be got through the grace of the Master, and anything which is not learned through a guru or obtained through his grace is not only valueless, but it is likely to be lost.

We have a great story in the *Mahabharata*, for instance, where a man goes to a famous Brahmin teacher, who is also the master archer of his time, Drona, but for some reason he is not accepted. But this boy makes a statue of the Master, worships it every day, and practises archery and becomes a Master himself. One day, the Master catches him and says, "Give me my *guru-dakshina*," the offering that we traditionally give to the guru on the completion of our spiritual training. He is a devotee and he says, "Yes, Master, anything you want." He says, "Your right thumb." Without that you cannot draw a bow. The devotee cut it off on the spot. This story is said to illustrate two great truths: that by *bhakti* you can achieve something very high, very great, but if the guru's grace, a living guru's grace is not there, it is lost.

So, I may say this is the foundation of the Indian spiritual tradition and culture, that knowledge of how to do something is not enough. It must have the permission and the blessing of the Master. This is a problem which we often face in the West, because we have arrived today at a stage in our cultural evolution, our technological evolution, where more and more we are doing things ourselves. Languages learnt by ourselves, carpentry, painting — everything.

There has been a transfer of the dependence to one's self, and I don't think you will disagree with me when I say that one of the sad consequences of this has been an inflation of the ego — that we can do everything ourselves. When we come to a deeper level of existence and have to go to the deepest levels, which you may call the soul, Divine, whatever it is, and when we wish to pursue such a career in spirituality and somebody comes along and says, "Well, you may have a system through the books and through cassettes and audio or video education, but you need a Master," there is generally a very great in-built resistance to this idea.

It is not merely intellectual, because I have been travelling first with my Master, Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj for many years, and after his lifetime now I am travelling for the last five years. I think this is something of a cultural transformation in our existence, but it is necessary to overcome it, realising that it is okay for the superficial values of a material existence, but certainly not for a spiritual life. I don't hesitate in emphasizing this. It is for you to accept or not. You can verify this truth only by practising something and seeing for yourself how far you can go in that. So, this is the first great difference between the Eastern approach to a spiritual life and the Occidental approach.

Then we come to this question of teachers. In India we have this one word 'guru' which we use in various ways. The guru is also the teacher in school. The father can be one's guru under certain traditions or, in the highest sense, it is the highly evolved spiritual master. Unfortunately, even in India we find a great deal of confusion as to who is a guru and who is not a guru. We have to carefully look into the whole issue and select a Master who is capable of giving or guiding you to the goal of your choice.

Now, coming to yoga itself, we have several yogic traditions in India. Hatha yoga is very popular in the West, I suspect more for the body beautiful and the body healthy than for any spiritual pursuit itself. In fact, it is used as some sort of a gymnastic technique, and it is very good. It is excellent. There is no question about it. It was evolved, as my Master told me. Before I came to him, I used to do it myself for several years — *asana*, *pranayama* — and in some ways I messed up my whole internal mechanism.

So I asked my Guruji, my Master, "How did this system evolve, and how is it so popular throughout the world today?" He said, "It is popular because people are happy with a healthy body and a healthy mind, which hatha yoga can undeniably give. There is no doubt about it." Then he added that it was evolved for that particular reason by the old *rishis*. He told me the rishis were meditating continuously all their lives, practically twenty-four hours a day, and because there was the danger of the physical body deteriorating under certain circumstances, they evolved this whole scheme of asanas and pranayama so that, while sitting in meditation, they had to frequently change their posture and see that the blood circulates, the psychic system is working properly, the nervous system is integrated, and so on.

What I am trying to say is the rishis, in their ultimate wisdom, evolved a system of physical and psychic practices which kept the body alive and fit so that they could continue to meditate until they attained their goal. So, they were only aids to meditation and could not possibly substitute for meditation. This is something we have to understand, that if one is interested in spiritual liberation, realisation, and the ultimate merger with the Infinite, hatha yoga certainly does not promise it, and it cannot give it. One has only to read the original Sanskrit texts of the hatha yogis to find this truth out, placed there by the founders of hatha yoga itself.

So, in our system of meditation, which is called Sahaj Marg, or 'the natural way', my Master avoids the preliminary steps *yama*, *niyama*, which are designed to give us a certain emotional and a certain ethical training, training in purity, training in values of life. We also avoid asana and pranayama, because the asana is only a posture which you must be able to hold continuously during the period of your meditation. There is nothing sacred about an asana. In fact, if you stand on your feet and you are able to meditate standing up, it is as good an asana.

My Master also said, and it is proved by the practice, that pranayama gets adjusted as we meditate. The breathing cycle slows down almost to the point of stopping. Here he added a caution, a warning, that without expert advice, pranayama can be extremely dangerous. I don't know about Europe and the West, but in India we have several cases, many cases of people who have practised pranayama without expert guidance having lost their mental balance and gone into psychic derangement. So, asana cannot harm us. Niyama and yama are good for us and are necessary. Pranayama can be dangerous, without even the benefit of giving us any spiritual values.

So, my Master said that these four things need not form part of our yogic technique. It was his feeling, it was his contention that we should receive ethical and moral guidance from our parents, from our social training institutions like the schools, and through the foundation of existence which we call religion. In fact, he said religion is the kindergarten school to make one ready for the spiritual life. It is in this tradition that the great ancient rishis who came out of Hinduism ceased to be Hindus. They were born as Hindus but became great Maharishis, Brahmarishis, Devarishis — so many classes of rishis.

It was in this tradition that Swami Vivekananda made one of his great pronouncements when he said, "It is good to be born in a religion, but it is bad to die in a religion." Now, this is a great truth rising from the religion which brought yoga into existence. It is *sanatana dharma* itself which says it, which says religion is but the first ladder in a series of so many ladders which is going to take you high up to the ultimate goal. My Master, in his own inimitable way, put the same truth in a different form. He said, "Where religion ends spirituality begins."

So, religion is a stage in our evolution. It is something common to all human beings, because human beings everywhere are born into some religion or the other. Unfortunately, we find that if they remain in those religions there have always been religious wars — cutting each other's throats in the name of God. So, it is necessary that we use religion as a step or a series of steps on our growth towards the final ultimacy, growing out of it, evolving out of it, not abandoning it.

I wish you to understand this very clearly, that there is not disrespect for religion. We don't throw away religion or abandon religion, but we view religion as the mother which gives birth to its child. During the period of gestation the child must be within the mother, but there comes a time when the child has to be separated from the mother. But the mother is the foundation of our culture. She is the central point of the family, of tradition, and though the child becomes physically separate from the mother, it does not abandon its mother in any sense. The real spiritual practitioner is respectful towards the religion which brought him up to the level that he could practise a spiritual method, and more so for giving him a master who evolved out of that same tradition.

Where religion ends spirituality begins. My Master went a step further. He said spirituality is not the end of all. It, too, is only a ladder on one's evolution, because spirituality is a practice destined to lead you somewhere, to something, and therefore he said, "Where spirituality ends reality begins." And even more astonishing was a statement that, "Where reality ends begins that bliss which we are all aspiring for." Now in the beginning, this was quite surprising and quite astonishing, that reality can have an end. It goes against all our education and our culture that there can be an end to reality. But my Master had the answer to that, too. He said, "When we are conscious of reality we are also conscious of the unreal." We are still living in the world of duality, the real and the unreal, the dark and the light, the cold and the hot, the good and the bad, the evil and the good — division, all these things.

So you see, the spiritual goal is set very, very high indeed. Not with the physical can it stop, not with the psychic can it stop, not with the mental/intellectual, not with even the spiritual. One has to go to that final goal which, for want of a better term, my Master called 'Nothingness' — that from which everything emerges, from which everything comes, but which in itself is nothing. It should not be difficult to understand this idea when you look at a tiny seed and the enormous tree which grows out of it.

For those of you who are familiar with the *Upanishads* and remember that story of a boy who went to his guru and said, "Can you show me reality, or whatever it is?" The guru said, "Bring me a fruit from that tree." A giant tree. The disciple brought it. The Master said, "Cut it. What do you see inside?" He said, "A lot of pulp and some seeds." He said, "It is from the seed that the tree comes. Now cut one seed." It was so small it could hardly be cut in two. When the disciple cut it the Master asked him, "What do you see?" He said, "Nothing." He said, "From this nothing that big tree has come."

For the Occidental mind, trained in the fields of physics and chemistry, the marvels of this whole material universe are the really non-present, what shall we say, existence that you call atoms and molecules and particles, and beyond that, to who-knows-where it goes. To me, it has always been surprising that scientists refuse to accept spirituality, because they say, "Where is God? Can you show him to me? What is this nonsense of a nothingness from which everything comes?" They are all getting Nobel Prizes left and right for doing the same thing, in what is called scientific research. This shows the enormous limitation of a mind which accepts its own limitation. Because when we say this cannot be, for us it is not.

In human relationship we call it a prejudice. Somebody says, "He is a very good man," and I say, "No, he is a bad man." "How do you know? Do you know him?" "No, but I feel it." Prejudice. We carry this prejudice into other spheres of knowledge, experience. You know how devastating was this prejudice in the Middle Ages when scientists were persecuted for defying theological edicts, so-called truths of existence, backed by the church of those days. The Inquisition, for instance. Scientists had to bow their heads before the Inquisition and pretend to deny the findings that they had found. In France, you know, the example of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and there is the famous example of Galileo. So, prejudice is in all walks of life.

My Master said it is nothing but a limitation we place on ourselves when we deny the possibility of something — anything. For instance, some children are able to ask, "Can you find me a black swan?" They do exist. "Can you find a swan as big as an elephant?" My Master said, "In this immense universe you cannot state anything which is impossible." And he said, take your own existence, the human being. A million years ago nobody could have ever said that a human being would exist. Today we are saying the same thing in a different way, that a time is coming when human beings cannot exist. So you see, spirituality needs an open mind, which says that in this universe anything is possible, and if this is possible, let me try it.

What is necessary for spiritual practice, as my Master said, is not qualification, is not ability, but willingness. Anyone who is willing to achieve a spiritual goal can achieve that spiritual goal, for two very important reasons. One, the practice, and, second, incomparably so, the Master himself. Because here comes the idea of grace, that by the grace of the Master anything is possible. When we think of this, we should not immediately think of so many material things, you see. "Can a cancer patient get well?" "Will this dreadful disease AIDS be ever removed from the face of this Earth?" Because we are looking into the negative aspects.

I want you to remember, I request you to remember, spirituality does not promise a healthy, happy physical life. It will be possible, but it is not a promise. Nor does it say that we have to suffer and be miserable, because the yogic tradition makes this mistake of ascetic practices: renouncing the family, renouncing the wife and children, going into the jungle. My Master said all this is stupid. Excuse me, there may be many of you who believe in those old traditions, but my Master said if you go to the forests and are thinking of your wife and children all the time, as one is bound to do if you are still a human being, how is it going to be useful? He said it is better that you should be in the home and bring the jungle into it.

Live in your house as if it is not yours. Being within the family, be totally non-attached. And there came that great truth, that once we have a duty to these people.

Many people ask in the West, "What do you get by practising yoga? You are only doing it for yourself. Is it not selfish?" It is not possible, because under this system, which my Master has perfected for us, the idea of duty is paramount. You have married, you have begotten children, it is your duty to live with them, protect them, nourish them. These are responsibilities that you have voluntarily accepted, and we have no right to run away from these responsibilities. He made it very clear that spirituality is not an escape route from a frustrated material existence, but it is the pursuit of a higher life which we accept, while basing our foundation in this existence of the family and society.

So you see, Sahaj Marg is quite a departure from the traditions even of India. My Master himself was a family man, doing whatever service he was doing till he retired, and his Master before him was the same, and all our abhyasis, as we call them, are people with families, with jobs. So you see, we have to be practitioners of yoga while living a family existence. This truth my Master put in a very simple way. He said, "Like a bird flies with two wings, we have to live in the material and spiritual lives simultaneously." Neither can be neglected for the other. And he said of the ancient sages of the past, if they ran away into the jungles and achieved perfection for themselves, it was as bad as today's materialist who forgets spirituality and is only worried about the material existence.

Sahaj Marg, the natural way of evolution, seeks to bring both these things together, to bring into existence what we call a balanced existence, a natural life where, recognizing the truth that we are living in this body, we live in it, maintaining it at peak efficiency. Not gilding the lily, as the English say, but maintaining it suitably, as we maintain our cars, our buses, our lorries, all these things. Recognizing the truth that it is a vehicle for the soul's evolution, and therefore it must be respected but not pampered. It must be kept fit but not unnecessarily healthy or, you know, magnificently physical, like Superman.

Similarly, the intellect is a divine computer for our use, and anyone who believes only in the intellect, as most intellectuals tend to do, are like computer scientists who think the computer is god, forgetting that we made the computer, we designed the computer, we are operating the computer. In this way, if you look at human existence, everything becomes a vehicle for our transformation, for our evolution. And our special yoga, which is evolved from raja yoga, emphasizes the need to respect this fantastic equipment that Nature has designed for us.

Therefore, there is no disrespect for this physical life, no reviling the body and its tendencies, no unnecessary emphasis on the eyes or the nose or the ears as paramount organs of perception, but a sane realisation that these are things which we need for our evolution and growth. Let us use them when we need to use them. And, he carried this teaching into practice. His statement was, just because we have eyes, we don't have to see everything outside. We use them when necessary. There is no point in saying, "Oh, I have eyes, therefore I look at all the beautiful things in this world." The eyes were not given to us to look at beautiful things alone. They were given to us to find the way, the legs to carry us around, the arms to work for us.

In this context you will permit me to tell you to tell you a small story, of how the hands and the legs and the eyes and the ears and the nose of a person each thought it was very important. They became very arrogant. The eyes said, "Without me, how can this body move?". The legs said, "What is the use of your seeing if I do not carry the body around?" The hands said, "Calm down, you may see, you may carry the body, but if I don't take the food and put it into the mouth, how are you going to live?" When this fight between the senses became intolerable, the soul quietly withdrew, and then all the senses realised who is the true boss, what we call the soul, the *atma*. It is for its purpose that the body is given to us, and when we make the purpose of the body itself of paramount importance, we make a grievous mistake.

So, Sahaj Marg says nothing but a simple thing: Live the physical life in a perfect way. It is neither right nor wrong. To look after your body is neither right nor wrong. It is necessary. To use the eyes to look at the road is neither right nor wrong. It is necessary. [gap in tape] ...and also live the spiritual existence, which is the real life, remembering his statement that, where reality ends bliss begins.

Here comes the final point, that meditation also is not something aesthetic or real or fundamental to our existence; it is a technique designed to look inwards. We have become experts at exteriorizing our organs of perception to achieve a balance. By meditation we hope to internalize, to look inside, and if there is the divine blessing, to see the enormous vastness of the inner universe, which is so vast that the external physical universe is nothing compared to it. There we evolve without growing, because this is another teaching of the Master's, that growth is not evolution, evolution may not be accompanied by growth. That we know today, when we see the growth in science, the growth in economics, the growth in gross national product — all these concepts which have become almost holy, things to be achieved at any cost, growth without happiness, scientific advancement at the danger of a civilization being wiped out, and the pursuit of happiness unlimited, at the cost of peace and happiness itself, eventually.

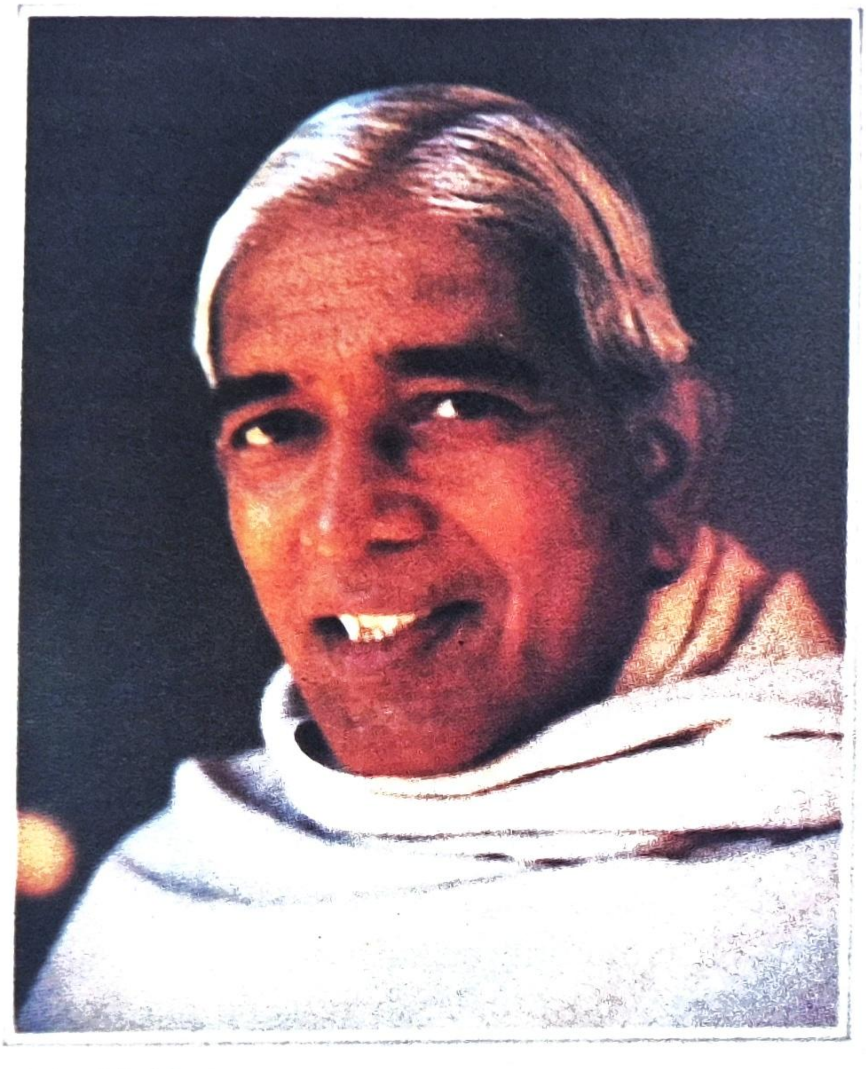
So, we find the material existence is working against itself. It is sort of obstructing its own progress. My Master said, "Material life, yes, it is necessary. Keep it to the necessary level and pursue the inner evolution of the spirit which has no limits." He also went on to say that, in the physical world, either you have to be strong or to be intellectual or to be wise. To climb Mont Blanc you certainly need two feet. To be a professor you need to learn and to teach. A fool cannot be a professor. But in the spiritual existence, he said if you are willing, there is nothing on earth or anywhere else which can stop your evolution.

Therefore, in conclusion I must say that material goals are wonderful, but not everybody can achieve everything in a material existence — not even those who are endowed with certain values, certain, what shall we say, qualities, because the world is full of wise people, of wise people who have no jobs, for instance. But spirituality is a field which is the ultimate equalizer of all human beings, where any human being, irrespective of sex, race, nationality, religion, can achieve this goal of spiritual endeavour. Therefore, it is not only the great equalizer of humanity, it is also the integrator of humanity, because in a real spiritual pursuit we forget our mutual differences, and therefore it brings about an integration of human beings which has not been possible hitherto on this earth of ours. It is certainly not a dream. It is possible, it has been possible, and it will continue to be possible — provided we co-operate.

This is the message of my Master, this is the natural way of evolution. It is natural because there is no paraphernalia of worship, there are no rituals, there is no practice. It is natural because, being what we are, yet we can become that which we have to become. It is natural, in the highest sense, that our past has no bearing on our future.

Thank you for your patience.

LA VOIE NATURELLE



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Conférence

Vendredi 22 septembre 1989 à 19 h 30
Amphithéâtre Richelieu - 17 rue de la Sorbonne [illegible]
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21

SPIRITUAL INSURANCE

Montpellier, France
28 June, 1990

A welcome to dear brothers who are of France. I don't know how many people are new here to the practice of Sahaj Marg. One thing I would like to say is, it is something which we are doing to build our future. The thought came to me during meditation that we have so many types of insurance policies, for all our needs, for our houses, and even for our life. The last one is very funny. I'm referring to life insurance. In many countries it is compulsory, and we think so much of our physical existence that we are prepared to pay enormous amounts to insure our existence here, but whisper when we talk of the spiritual life, when we talk of future life. Nobody seems to wonder, or even care how we insure **that** life. I would like to suggest that meditation is an insurance for your eternal life. It is not just some insurance where somebody gets the money after we die, but it is something by which you benefit yourself.

In all our human social insurances, something has to be broken or something has to be destroyed before you get something back. Anybody who thinks of it will understand how crazy it is. Because if what you insure is not lost or stolen or destroyed, you don't get anything. So, you are paying money for nothing. This is the truth of all insurance. Of course, in modern societies they make it compulsory to protect somebody else against our foolishness. Cleaning and meditation in Sahaj Marg protects us against our foolishness, and also insures our future development. And it doesn't cost us anything, just some meditation, some cleaning. I would like this: I would like you people, as well as our existing brothers and sisters, to understand this aspect of a spiritual practice, that we are not doing anything for the present. We cannot do anything for the past. But we can do everything for the future. It is for that future which our spiritual practice assures us, that I invite you all with all my heart.

Thank you.

22

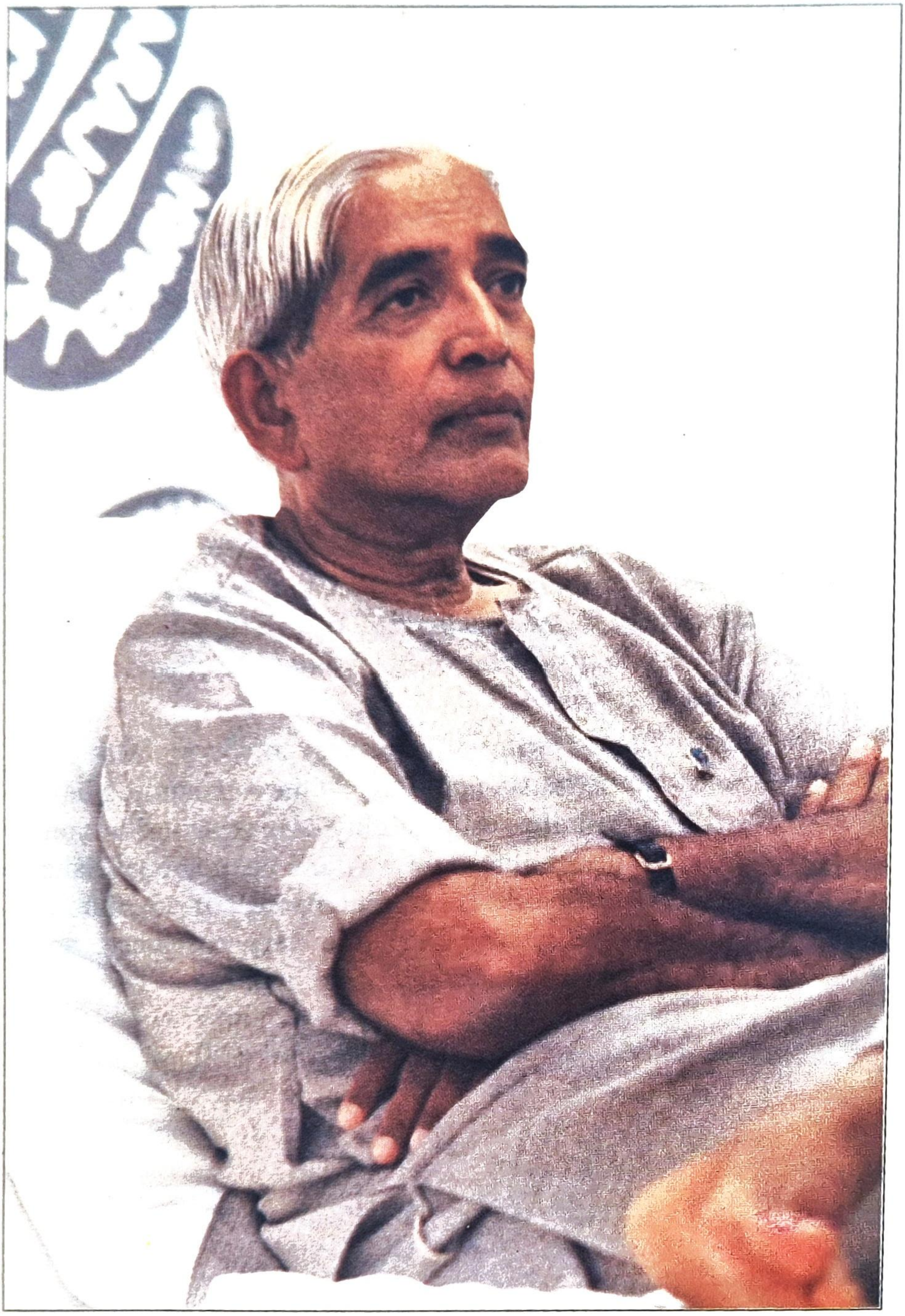
GURU PURNIMA DAY

Augerans, France
8 July, 1990

Today, in India, it is the *Guru Purnima* day. It's the day of the full moon, and dedicated to the Guru, supposed to be a very important day in the spiritual life of an abhyasi. Abhyasis who can be with their Master on such a day are considered as to be very blessed.

I take this opportunity of conveying to you my Master's blessings on this very auspicious day. At the same time, I have to charge you all with the responsibility of making use of your spiritual opportunities in the right way and not go about Sahaj Marg in a merely mechanical way. But please, pay attention to your inner character changes that are very necessary, and without which real progress cannot come.

May Master bless you.



23

A MORAL FOUNDATION

Augerans, France
15 July, 1990

Shri Ram Chandra Mission is a worldwide organization. For many years it was registered only in India, but it was functioning in other countries without a legal entity being present. Even in 1972 under my Master's instructions the Mission was registered in Denmark. Subsequently in Canada and the United States and, I think, much later in Germany, here in France, Italy. Now these national registrations become necessary without being really important for our functioning. Necessary in what way? To protect your interests, to give you an identity, and to see that we function under a legal authorized umbrella which registration in this country affords. Otherwise our activities could be suspect. "Why are you not a legal association?", etc. So I repeat, a national registration is necessary, not important.

Therefore, I do not like too much disputes about national Missions and rules here and rules there. We are functioning with our hearts and we should realise that the Master is the Master for **all,** not only for the French Mission or the European Missions. He is an Indian, but does not belong to India. He is in France, but is not a Frenchman. He travels everywhere, without being anywhere. All for your benefit.

So, this idea of rigid barriers of nationalities must not exist in the minds of abhyasis. I am a little sorry whenever I hear of this need for co-operation internationally, because it shows that we are still thinking in terms of nationalities, geographic boundaries, political limitations, linguistic barriers, etc. In this concern, while I am speaking about this in general, I have pleasure in informing you that for the first time we have received here two abhyasis from Minsk, in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. I hope you will welcome them with all your heart. [applause] More are coming from Russia, from Hungary, also for the first time, and I hope in the coming years there will be representatives here from all the countries of the world.

Now you, as French men and French women, have to take the first essential step in breaking these barriers of race, language, and nationality. You have to forget that you are French people. Until you do this you cannot welcome another person as a brother or a sister. The importance of being a host, whether as a country or as a family or as an individual, lies in forgetting that you are the host. My Master said, "In your own house be a guest." So, I think the French people, my brothers and sisters here, should preferably think they are Indians, *par exemple*, and be guests and not be hosts. Spiritually speaking, the Master is always the host. We are all guests. So let us, as guests, learn to behave as brothers and sisters.

In this context I have something to say, too, that we cannot be brothers and sisters if we are going to develop romantic relationships and indulge in all sorts of stray activities. I have been hesitating to speak about this for the last two, three years, because the French are not only very happy, but they are very proud of their so-called freedom. We should not be proud of freedom. We must be able to use freedom in such a way that we produce in ourselves something of which we can be proud. My freedom must produce in me something I can be proud of, otherwise that freedom is a waste, it is probably a barrier to my progress.

So, brothers and sisters means: brothers and sisters, especially when you are here in the ashram. I would like you to feel that, even if you are a husband and a wife, you should consider yourself as a brother and sister and adopt, or try to adopt, a period of celibacy during your stay in this ashram. It is not a difficult thing, I assure you. Because non-celibacy today, or shall we say hyperactivity, in the other sense, is compulsive and not by preference. Compulsive, both by the assenting partner, and perhaps the dissenting partner, and compulsive because of the samskaras which are driving you in that direction.

Of course, you may say this is an Indian idea, but no moral idea has a nationality. All the saints, from wherever they may have come, have said the same thing. It cannot be an accident that they all say the same thing, repeat the same thing ad nauseum. 'Ad nauseum' because we don't accept it and we revolt against it, and present our so-called flag of freedom as something which we cherish, knowing that we are destroying ourselves.

There are many reasons why celibacy is prescribed for a spiritual aspirant. It is not an interminable celibacy. A celibacy in the real sense is that you don't participate in sexual activities under certain circumstances, unless it is a spontaneous act of nature. When it is not spontaneous, when people build up, you know, a sort of pressure in themselves, which they have to release, you are, shall I say, demoting, declining in value, reducing in value something which is very profound, since it is the only activity in which we participate almost in a divine way — in the act of creation.

So you see, celibacy is a very important area. Anybody who has practised even a little self-control is able to realise that very soon the compulsive nature of the sexual propensity goes. It disappears. Then you find the real freedom. It is not a freedom which denies the normal human relationship between husband and wife. On the contrary, it fortifies their love. If I may be so mundane and banal, they will find that in their mutual union there is much more harmony, much more peace. Often so profound that you don't even know that there has been a sex interplay between the husband and the wife.

So, instead of this crazy coupling out of compulsion and out of artificial creation of needs, as my Master's representative it is my duty to point out to you that, apart from all this, celibacy is the single most effective way of strengthening your wills. Without will power there is no success in the spiritual arena. Meditation fails because we have no willpower behind it. Even more important, cleaning fails because there is no will power behind it. Most important, many people don't meditate because they don't have the will to meditate.

So you see, will power is at the root of a spiritual practice. And believe me, in one single act of non-participation in sexual activities, amorous activities... because I want you to understand that if you are going around hugging and kissing all the time you are artificially stimulating sexual activities. I don't think sex needs to be stimulated. Wherever it needs the stimulation of hugging and kissing, and petting, as they say in America, let me assure you sex is already dead. That is why your lives are so unfulfilled, lacking happiness, lacking fulfilment, lacking satisfaction, lacking love.

So, as a beginning I recommend to you — I cannot insist, I recommend to you as my Master's representative, as your spiritual guide — that during your stay in the ashram here you should sincerely practice celibacy, keeping each other one arm's length away all the time. I mean, it is a recommendation, because I am a human being like you all and I have gone through all the problems that you are facing. It's not necessary to have three wives and three girlfriends to have these problems; one wife is enough! [laughter] Yes. Or one husband is enough, *par contra* (on the other hand). Because the more the girlfriends or boyfriends, etc., you are only multiplying the problem, not changing the problem.

The bliss, the liberation that follows when you are able to take charge of yourself and your activities by a developed will power, you cannot understand. People who are just happy with the political freedom or a geographical freedom are being fooled by a spurious freedom, which is offered as a substitute for higher freedoms which are denied to us. It is these higher freedoms that a spiritual life affords; it is these higher freedoms which a spiritual life offers you, without which a lower freedom is only the freedom of the animal to roam in the jungle. It is not a freedom; it is a foraging animal looking for food. When we as human beings are only looking for food and sex, we have not risen above the animal existence.

Many people write to me, many abhyasis write to me of their problems, most of which are self-created. It is tragic that even in this ashram we have seen some marriages broken, because unfortunately, as the Mission expands and abhyasis grow in number, there is a certain unnecessary, unfortunate mixing together of people, which if wrongly used cannot only break families but break hearts.

Therefore, it is most important that in the years to come, when we come here, we preserve our essence of anonymity in this: that you are connected only with the Master and nobody else. In this, constant remembrance is an absolute must. Then your mind has no time, or no space, or whatever you like, to wander here and there and to create unnecessary friendships and other associations, often having an unfortunate conclusion.

It is a delight for me to marry people in this ashram, but believe me, it breaks my heart when I see marriages being broken up here. This satsangh is not meant to be a marital bureau. It is under no circumstances to be used by abhyasis as a field for hunting. Therefore, I make this proposition, seeking your co-operation, that when you come inside the gate of this ashram, leave all ideas of worldly love outside and bring into this ashram only love for Divinity. In this lies your security, in your own marital relationship with your husband or with your wife, securities of your family, and security for all.

We are trying to build a society in which no man, no woman, no boy, no girl need be afraid. No wife should be afraid of sending her husband here. Many of the men here know how opposed their wives are, because they say, "What is going on here? I hear this couple is divorced, that couple is divorced, this couple is having an affair." Even more afraid are the men who are not abhyasis, of sending their wives here. We have to reassure our families that in this ashram, and similar ashrams, wherever they may be, activity and love of the highest order only prevail. We must be able to assure them by our behaviour that this is not a field in which love of the mundane or human level flowers. Here we are trying to develop a higher love: love for God, love for the Self.

Anyone who has to seek love from outside does it because he doesn't have it or she doesn't have it. That is why there is this frantic search for love. When you are able to love yourself, I mean, devil take the rest of humanity; you don't need them any more, in reality. But they continue to be brothers and sisters in the real sense. So, brothers and sisters, let us take this first step, in not only calling ourselves brothers and sisters, but **being** brothers and sisters, at least in this ashram. You are staying here for a week, for two weeks, I mean, people elsewhere in the world would laugh if you said it is difficult. It is difficult because you have never tried it.

I sincerely recommend to you what has been my Grand-Master's teaching, my Master's teaching, the teaching of sages all over the world through the ages, that for **this** reason celibacy is a must. Again, I cannot compel anything. But I wish to tell you that there have been some unsavoury occurrences in the ashram in the last few days. A teenage couple was found making love at noon in one of the dormitories, and they are only following the behaviour of the parents.

This is another request I have to make, that parents must feel responsible for their children, not allow them to run riot, under some illusory feeling of giving them their freedom, but by training them in self-control, self-regulation, proper behaviour, so that they take the first steps towards creating in themselves an inner freedom of which they can be proud.

So you see, we are responsible, as the elder generation, for the next generation which is below us. I say this because I have found parents hugging and kissing behind the trailers and the vans and tents. In the East such behaviour is considered not only impolite, but obscene. I would not go to that extent, or run the risk of insulting you, but I again suggest that you should think of it in such terms and think what you are doing, how it can influence others.

You know today that you don't have to smoke. If someone near you is smoking, you can also have problems with your health. You see, anything you do will affect everybody else who is here. In this sense, there can be no individual freedom, in a moral, spiritually-oriented aspirant. It comes out of a recognition of the fact that anything you say, anything you do, is inevitably going to affect other people. Drop a stone in the pond and the ripples will go on spreading.

So I request you: think before you say anything, think many times before you do anything. And remember that a brotherhood and a sisterhood can only be built on a moral foundation. Without a moral foundation it is a lie to say we are brothers and sisters.

So, I hope you will consider my words, give it some attention, and change your attitude to life in such a way that you develop your will power, and your sadhana becomes more and more effective. Because, while many people are proud of having an ashram here, it is no use if it does not liberate people. Otherwise it becomes a prison, where again we bring our problems, our relationships, and people are agonizing here. They are only changing the home. Instead of weeping and agonizing at home, they are weeping and agonizing here, and expecting some sort of a miracle from the Master. In Sahaj Marg there are no miracles. We expect each one of you to perform a miracle upon yourself, and then the Master must say, "What a miracle!"

Thank you.

24

CELEBRATION OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Augerans, France
24 July, 1990

My Master told me that when great saints have their birthday celebrated, it was an occasion for happiness. Not their happiness but our happiness, as indicating how much can be achieved in one more year of existence. He also added something that Lalaji Maharaj has said: that in the case of ordinary human beings, it is normally an occasion for sorrow, because it shows us how much more degradation, how much more sorrow, how much more grossness we have accumulated.

I had the idea that it is like two cars travelling, one going forward, one going backward. This is not only the tragedy of the human life, but also the tragedy of the saintly life. Because there you have the saint moving forward, most of humanity moving backward in their cars, and he gets more and more alone, more and more lonely, more and more isolated. I understood from this, that when Babuji grew older and older, it was wrong to say that he was withdrawing from us, or from life. It was a manifestation of our withdrawal from him, because he had to move on, and we were going backwards.

Poor man, he had no choice. For him destiny beckons, and Lalaji says, "Come!"

Towards the end, Babuji Maharaj told me, "If my work is not completed, it will not be my fault, because I have done all that I could. I have not had any co-operation. What little I could do was actually Lalaji's work and perhaps, out of mercy for me, out of compassion for me, he may call me back to himself." I believe that is what happened in 1983. Lalaji must have said, "Enough of this nonsense. Come home! Leave that fellow you have prepared to face the further problems." So, that is why I am before you today.

Why I say this is, it is unfortunate that normally we celebrate the birthdays without referring to our growth spiritually. Every birthday cannot be automatically an occasion for celebration. In India we celebrate the birth anniversary, the death anniversary, and I don't know what else. It has become a crazy system. We should celebrate only when we have something to celebrate. If we have nothing to celebrate, it is better to close our doors and weep inside that, "Lord, one more year has gone and perhaps I am not even where I was, perhaps I am even behind where I was last year," and then pray for His grace, for His mercy, for His help. This is an idea I would like to give you on this occasion: Let us look into ourselves and see what is there to celebrate.

Nowadays it has become the fashion to celebrate everything. In America they have Mother's Day and Father's Day. Later they added Grandmother's Day and Grandfather's Day. And because it is good for sales, they shall have first cousin's day, second cousin's day, wife day, first divorced wife day, second divorced wife day. It's good for business! So you see, we have made a sham and we mock destiny when, instead of grieving, we celebrate. Our business here is to convert situations of grief and sorrow to situations of joy, happiness, freedom, liberation. This is what spirituality can mean. As Jacky Baroukh suggested, "We have to forget ourselves."

When a car moves on the road, we are all the time buying petrol, paying good money for it. We are burning that fuel all the time, and the exhaust must go. But suppose we hold on to the exhaust and build a tank for it and go on accumulating it. It would be crazy. Even the simplest, unicellular forms of life know this wisdom. They take in their nourishment at one end, retain what is good, and throw out the rest. It is the human being who accumulates everything, because we don't know the value of what we are accumulating.

Therefore, you find nowadays in houses trash cans, all sorts of funny things picked up on the beach, and these have become decorations in your drawing rooms. I don't know whether to be amused or to be sorry or to just laugh when I see these things. And, of course, when I see some of the 'arts' so-called in Europe, whether it is painting or sculpture or music, the only word I can say is that it is bizarre nonsense. But it is being marketed very capably, and we are slaves of modern marketing techniques. What is advertised widely in flashy magazines is, ipso facto, valuable. To add to our madness we have credit cards. So, you see how this is multiplied. Grossness upon grossness, layer upon layer of grossness, because we have lost every sense of value that we ever possessed. Today the big is good, what sells most is good, what is most advertised is good, and it is like that.

We have to re-examine our standards of values. First and foremost, we must be able to recognize the good from the bad. Then we must develop the discernment and the ability to keep the good, throw away the bad. Then we must develop the ability to refine the good and throw away what is bad in it. Going on in this fashion, we come to the essence of things. And *voilà*, we have the transmission.

So, this is how we have to go, progressively. We should also remember Babuji's message to us, that when we are thinking of our pain and our sorrow and our loss and brooding over it, we are multiplying their effect upon us. And their effect means more grossness. So, we have to forget ourselves.

Now, somebody suggested that we collect human beings. It is not possible with all this grossness. Isn't it? But it is easy to collect souls, which have no shape, which have no form, which have no weight, and take up no space. So I believe a Master collects souls, and you don't even find a bulge in his pocket. Perhaps he hopes that some day there will be a bulge, because something multiplied infinitely must have some bulge somewhere.

This is why we have the ten maxims of Sahaj Marg, all positively oriented, giving you positive things, positive teachings, which only says what to do, what to have, what to accept, and not rules about what not to do, what not to have. Because if we have to make maxims like that, no library in the world would fill the volumes that we would have to write. I would suggest that every one of you go through the ten maxims every day. Just the maxims — read them once every day.

Those of you who have been here for the past six or seven years may not have observed how much you have changed. I remember the time when we had meditation in the morning at nine o'clock. Then it became eight, half-past seven, now half-past six. Nobody is protesting. So you see, change is very easy.

Some years before, abhyasis were smoking everywhere, all the time. Today there is no protest about not smoking in the ashram. Some days ago I gave a talk. I was a little — I won't say afraid because I am never afraid, but it was like a lion entering a cave, thinking maybe there is another lion inside; it could be friendly, it could be unfriendly — concerned. But from all the letters I have had, except three letters which have expressed feelings of guilt for what has been going on in the ashram, all other's letters have welcomed what I said. Many have thanked me for opening their eyes to a situation about which they have never received any education in their lives, about which today churches don't speak, priests don't tell you anything, and your parents dare not say anything, because they are indulging in the very nonsense which they would ask you to stop.

This is one reason for the breakdown of morality today. Parents dare not open their mouths before their children, because children will say, "What are **you** doing?" Which is the next important point. Before you can teach anybody, you have to be clean yourself. Before talking of saintliness, you should be at least on the way to saintliness. Before talking about moral codes, you must at least accept those codes yourself. It may be successful, it may not be, it does not matter. But you will find that when you accept it with your heart, it is no more a question of success or failure. Because what we want to stop, stops, and we don't even remember it afterwards. This is the great facility accorded by the Divine, that when we accept something with our heart, the whole thing fades away. We don't have to fight any situation or any tendency or temptation; it all vanishes. It is like when the sun shines, all the fog and the mist is gone.

This is the way of Sahaj Marg. This is the mystery, and this is the great tradition and, I would say, the immense gift of nature, that acceptance with the heart makes everything possible. First, acceptance of the teaching. Next, acceptance of the practice. Next, acceptance of Him who gives you the teaching and the practice and the goal which He is offering. So, you see that it is a very simple thing.

But so long as we are concerned with our own problems, our own human relationships, our miseries, it is like the water on the sides of a river near the bank, full of mud, full of leaves, going round and round. The middle of the river is flowing past merrily: clear water, clean water, beautiful to look at, ever moving. There's no use in saying that this water is also part of the river. Yes, but by definition only that which moves is a river, and if it is stagnant in the sides, it will stink. And we can do nothing about it. Now, what is the secret? Because, instead of being in contact with the moving stream, it is in contact with the bank, the restraining force, grossness, tendencies. So, all that you have to do is to move into the main stream. Normally you should all be experts in this, because you are able to drive from lane one to lane two to lane three in your cars, going faster and faster. You have only to imagine Sahaj Marg similarly, as a multi-lane road, and keep moving from lane to lane. Then automatically you will move forward.

The secret of success is acceptance of the teaching, the practice, the Master, and the goal in your heart, with your heart, and this will automatically make you forget yourself. When you have forgotten yourself, it is His business to remind you of what you really are, which is the first spiritual awakening that we have. I am not this. I am That. Then begins the grand journey in actually becoming That.

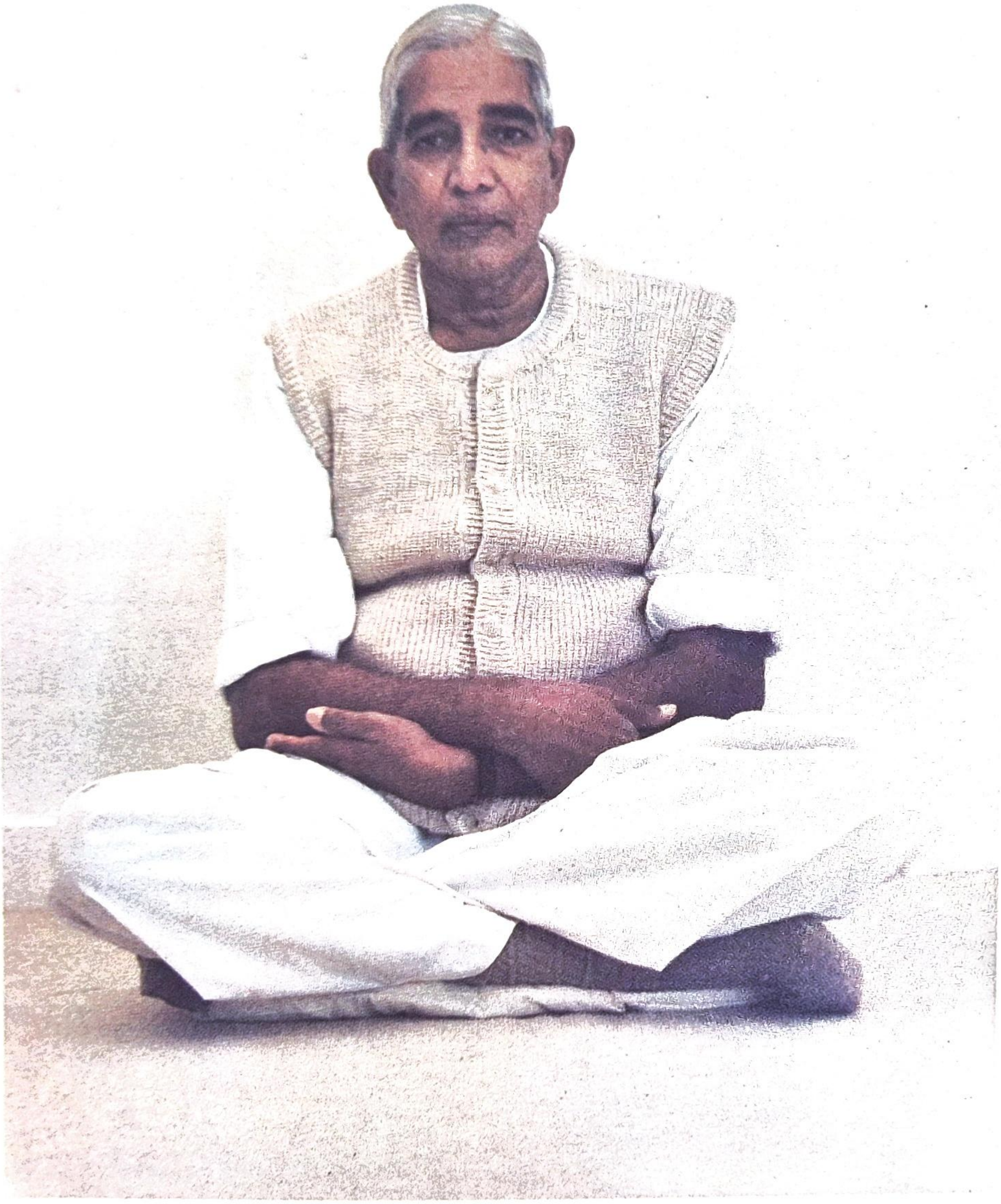
It is like a son of a father, this three year-old, four year-old, growing up to become like his father. In the old days it was an honour to become like one's father, because in those days the fathers were evolved beings, examples to their children, and the children valued them, honoured them, and aspired to become like them. Unfortunately, in today's social breakdown, there are few fathers whom we would like to emulate. Few mothers, too. Therefore we need a Master. Because when you cannot have in every family someone whom you can worship and aspire to emulate, you are compelled to turn to one of those individuals who are thrown up by history, by circumstances, by universal cosmic demand, who can become our example, like whom we wish to become, and therefore, who becomes our goal and reality.

So, there is no wonderful thing about a Master or the goal. Therefore, in the Christian tradition we address Him as Father. Priests are even today addressed as Father, but it is sad that even they are not worth emulating, because they are only professional priests, not real fathers.

So, I don't think I have anything more to say, except that we should periodically review ourselves. The diaries that you send me, you should read first, because you will know what you were one month ago and what you are this month. It is no use in trying to see your face; you put the mirror before the Master's face. You have to look into the mirror yourself. So, the diary is most valuable to you. If you are using it properly by recording faithfully, sincerely, every truth, and you read it periodically, it is a self-evaluation of what you were, what you are. If you are still what you are what you were, then it is time to, you know, sort of gird up your loins and walk. Otherwise the diary is a waste of time for you, for me, also.

I, too, would like to see diaries which show progress. It gives some happiness. What is the use, if it is like looking at a road map when you are travelling by car and instead of seeing the next town in front of you, you are actually in the town behind you. Somewhere you have lost the way. At least then you should turn your car around and find your way back. In that sense our diaries are road maps of our progress. The future is unmapped, but He knows what it is. Therefore, we have to surrender and say, "Please take me on."

Now I propose a short sitting.



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ADDRESS TO USA GENERAL MEETING

Augerans, France
25 July, 1990

I would first of all like to tell you what we do here in Europe. This ashram is not the French ashram. It is the European headquarters of the Mission. Therefore, it is separately funded. Otto, I'm right? Donations from all over Europe and, in fact, from other parts of the world, too, helped in the acquisition of this ashram, and they continue to help in the maintenance of this ashram. Its finances are separate, though for legal reasons, because it is in France, it forms part of the funds of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission, France. But in our minds it is very clear these funds belong to the European headquarters ashram.

I had initially thought of even segregating these funds in a country outside France, but for some strange, legal requirements it seems not to be possible. Otherwise I would have taken it out of France to avoid this ambiguity which is at the moment. We still are considering, Otto. We should keep looking into that — outside France, so that there is no mix-up between the ashram fund, the European headquarters ashram fund, and the rest. In that case, if we are able to achieve that, this *Les Amis Shri Ram Chandra Mission* does not become necessary. This ashram is managed not by Shri Ram Chandra Mission France, but by an ashram committee composed of members from all over Europe. Otto is one of the leading figures in that committee, and I try to see that as far as possible there is no mixing between the Mission and the ashram business.

I say this because we are now going through the process of acquiring or leasing properties in other places in France. For instance, recently we have leased out a property in Montpellier on a nine-year lease. It was an old ramshackle bar, one of those sorts of sleazy joints, but we have refurbished the whole thing and it is a beautiful meditation hall. When I was there on the twenty-eighth of last month we had an inauguration. I gave two sittings. It can comfortably house four hundred people. So, that is now Montpellier centre. It is rented. Eventually we may acquire it. I don't know. For legal reasons, again, it is not the Mission which rents it but we have formed a separate organization called 'The Friends of Shri Ram Chandra Mission', *'Les Amis Shri Ram Chandra Mission'*, Montpellier.

Now the problem comes: we don't want that in any way connected legally or in our minds with the Mission. So, if the European headquarters ashram funds could be segregated this confusion would be largely avoided. We are now thinking of a similar place in Paris, in the Gare de Lyon, but it is twenty thousand francs a month. That is twenty thousand francs a month — four thousand dollars a month approximately. So, things are growing, and as we grow, we have got to rationalize and structure things so that efficiency does not suffer.

Structuring means making things fluid enough to intermingle with each other. You have, for instance, the respiratory system and the circulatory system, divided only in the lungs by an osmotic barrier which, if it doesn't exist, you wouldn't get your oxygen and throw out your carbon dioxide. It is a very light barrier, and the process of osmosis is very simple, but it exists. So, two systems are separate, but integrated in a way they can function together. We have the nervous system, the muscular system, the skeletal system, all functioning in harmony, in unison. Separate systems, separate sub-systems, separate sub-sub-systems, but under a total control of what I would call the will.

Babuji Maharaj has exhibited in ample measure that the will can influence, and **must** influence, your bodily functions, too. I don't see why it is different in the structuring of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission worldwide, that ultimately it should be the human will which prevails. But, when it is a weak will, as Bill Waycott just said, thinking not so much 'happiness'. I would like to correct it, as 'pleasure'. Nobody goes to the Caribbean for happiness; they go there for pleasure.

The American confusion between happiness and pleasure is something to be, I think, forcefully condemned. The American people need re-education on the distinction between happiness and pleasure. Happiness is not pleasure, pleasure need not be happiness, or perhaps never is. It lasts for the moment, and then you have the morning-after-the-night-before syndrome.

So you see, the Americans need a lot of education, and now I know there isn't education, because they think they know everything already. The almighty American dollar is a curse on the Americans. I wish the dollar would continue to fall where it would not be worth even one French franc. That would bring some sense to the Americans. They would not buy pleasure, they would not buy happiness, they would not buy comforts then with a dollar easily earned, cheaply earned. If you just look to your American public debt, your government is putting you into more and more debt every year to give you cheap goods. They may be quality goods but they are cheap. And how are you acquiring your public debt? Obviously, through imports. So, you are paying for things at thirty cents that are worth three dollars and plunging your government into debt, which is plunging you into debt.

You have this phenomenon of the credit card. Now, once upon a time, there was one. There are twenty-five now in every wallet! I have seen people in hotels fumbling around about which to use. They have some for gasoline, some for yacht hiring, some for car hiring, some to pay telephone bills with. I mean, soon it will become like a pack of cards. Ace of spades, things like that, you see.

So, it is time that we educate our abhyasis in use of their will. The intelligence is not so essential. Here comes the problem of the ego. I said I have been concerned with certain developments in the States. I have found problems between preceptors. Well, I would like to mention names here if you don't mind. Between, for instance, Kirstin and Kannan in Atlanta. It came to, I don't know, Kirstin said she didn't know even of the existence of this problem. But obviously it existed, because it came to me. I know there have been problems with Leslie Kirby and Pramod Sharma. These are only the opening up of symptoms of deep laid prejudices — ego.

I have found of late a tendency in some Americans to be afraid of more and more Indians coming into the Mission, afraid of a possible Indianization of the Mission. I don't know what they mean by that term, because the Mission is Indian. We don't need to Indianize Shri Ram Chandra Mission. It is Indian. Like most of the American goods you sell in America are made in Korea, and here and there, all over the world, but not in America. Most of the cars you own are not made in America. I wonder how the Americans call themselves American. They subsist on imported goods. Now, this is a moral import. It is not import of worldly goods. It is a moral import, very much better for you than importing Toyotas, and I don't know, Canon cameras, and all these luxury things that you buy from outside the USA.

So, this prejudice has to go. We have no Indian abhyasis, we have no American abhyasis, we have no Japanese abhyasis. We have only abhyasis in this Mission. I am very sorry to see this idea of Indians versus Americans coming up. It is a shame. It is a scandal. It is something of which I would not tolerate even a mention in future. I would bring my hand down very heavily on people who even suggest that such a thing exists anywhere in the world.

I repeat: it is an Indian Mission. It originates in India. You don't have American Buddhism, for heaven's sake. Buddhism is Buddhism. Christianity is Christianity. Whether you like it or not, it came from Christ, and he was not an American. He was a Jew who made himself a Christian, by virtue of being Christ.

So, this idea that, "There are Indians more and more coming into the Mission. For heaven's sake, it is going to be Indianized; the Indians are taking over." There is nothing to take over. It was always Indian, it will always be Indian. We are members of the Mission. Like the American government: some day I hope there will be a black President. It will still be the American government. It will not immediately become an African government by virtue of a Negro holding office. Or, perhaps an Indian will assume the presidency, which would be a very good thing. It wouldn't be an Indian government; it would still be the President of the United States of America, the position being occupied by an Indian. I don't see why not.

You are a polyglot society. You import your intellect. The basic American has no intellect. You are working with the intellect or the high-tech intellect of people you are importing from abroad, under a cloak of immigration laws which are designed for you to churn the cream off the top, and leave the rest of the dregs of society in other worlds dying for their food. You are leeching on the whole of the world. Excuse me. I am going to be harsh today because it is a time to face reality. If you didn't have the Indians and the Mexicans and the Japanese and the Germans and the Jews working for you, I don't know what would happen to the real Americans. I shudder to think of that situation. If, as is suggested by one of the books of Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, all this high-tech society suddenly decides to leave America, what would you do? You wouldn't know even how to telephone; you wouldn't know how to maintain your telephone system.

So you see, you are heavily dependent on the rest of the world. Let us not think that because you earn a lot of dollars you are rich. Your riches come from a society which leeches upon the whole world, which plucks their brains out for its use. You should be grateful to those who are not Americans, who are building your society in such a way that eventually, God willing, you may be a real American society. Even American society is heading towards American society, someday, God willing, with your co-operation, if you are willing to use and integrate into your society, without differentiation of race, caste, languages, etc., the outside help that you desperately need — not only the millions of dollars that you are borrowing — it is the people you have to develop.

In this endeavour the Mission can be very, very useful. Today for four hundred people, tomorrow for four hundred thousand. That is our motive, you know, to restructure society, to rebuild the human race into some form in which you can say, "Here, at last, we have that human for which Babuji wanted or wished or prayed, and for which he strove all his life." A real human being with a human heart, no longer American or Indian or Christian or Jew, but a human being, a setting in the jewel of the crown of the Lord. A jewel set in the crown of the Lord.

Please remember, I am going to be extremely strict in this aspect. I don't want my Mission destroyed. It is **my** Mission. I am, for the first time, claiming this 'my-ness' because I am a trustee. I am holding it in trust for my Master, and a trustee has more responsibility than even the owner. The owner can say, "Throw the damn thing out, it doesn't matter," but the trustee has to hold it. It is mine to protect. It is mine to nurture. It is mine to cherish. It is mine to love. It is mine to make grow, and I will not tolerate any impediment in these efforts, human or otherwise. This is a very categorical statement. I will not repeat it again. I hope there will be no need to repeat it again. In future, I don't want preceptors, you know, shrugging their shoulders. There is no Indian, there is no American. I repeat: you are preceptors of the Mission, serving the Master under his orders, serving the people of the country in which you are put. This must absolutely go, you see, this thought. I am very sorry that it is putting up its, you know, hydra head here and there. The time to stamp out this is when you can still put your foot on it.

So, these are my instructions to Mr. William Waycott and the others concerned, that wherever such things happen they should report it to me immediately, and I will take very stern action in future. It goes without saying that the Indians will also be held responsible if they are in any way giving room to this feeling that they are Indians, and the Americans are separate from them.

We are working for an integration of humanity through the spiritual medium that is open to us. The integration must be such that hearts are linked together, without respect to what we are or what we were. It is a human integration through love, which must mean that there are no differences between us. We are trying to eradicate differences, in one stroke remove differences, bring about the idea that we are human beings, wherever destiny or past samskara may have put us on this planet.

We are like passengers travelling in one jumbo jet. If the plane crashes, all of us die. The American with, I don't know, a hundred thousand dollars worth of travellers cheques and unlimited credit in his pocket is not going to die less easily or more happily than an Indian with no money in his pocket. We all crash, we all die. This planet is our ship, and if anything goes wrong with this planet... Let me assure you it is easier to destroy this planet than people think. Spiritually, it can be done in a second. It will not be done, because nobody wants it to be done. Such a measure is only necessary when people think this is mine, that is mine, that is mine, and you know, everything, the planet as a whole.

So, unless you have, at the moment at least, the ability to develop a planetary consciousness, a consciousness which embraces this whole world of ours, and make it one world, one home for all human beings… It is like a house where a family lives together. Each, no doubt, has a room — this is the children's room, this is the master room that the parents occupy; this is the drawing room, this is the kitchen — but the house as a whole belongs to all the family. We should have the ability and the meekness, the humility, the love, to develop such a concept in our lives, that this is one planet, we are inhabitants of one planet; countries are artificial, political barriers are artificial, economic booms are artificial.

I hope that along with your spiritual practice you will try to inculcate, first in yourself and then in others, this idea of a unitary consciousness, the essential unity of life everywhere, expanded beyond human beings, to deer and the things that you kill all the time. I am shocked that in France they just shoot deer and throw them away. They don't even eat the venison any more. Shooting for the fun of it. 'Hunting', they call it.

So, this is my demand. It ceases to be a request. Let me tell you very plainly that people who don't co-operate, I shall just sieve out now in future, you see, preceptors, abhyasis, black, white, American, Indian, it doesn't bother me. My Master once told me in Denmark, when he was very, very upset by certain trends and developments, "If things continue like this I shall stop my work on Europe." I said, "But Babuji, you are committed." He said, "No. While Lalaji gave me the work, I have the freedom to decide where I shall work and why." It is just, you know, a matter of a second — you just stop thinking of America and our responsibility is finished. You may have the ashram. You can have it as a gift. What you will do with it, I don't know, without the spiritual backing.

So, please remember that the essence is spirituality. It is for that we are here. It is to grow spiritually we are here, and if we continue to bicker between Jews and Christians, Bostonians and Californians, Indians and Americans, preceptor and non-preceptor, we are only shaking the foundation of the edifice we are trying to build — a super-structure cannot be built. I hope all of you will remember this, bring it into practise, and show me the results.

I am also concerned that some preceptors are sort of reneging on their responsibility. It doesn't matter. I can change preceptors. Babuji told me what I can give, I can take back. If it is yours I will not take it out of you, but what I have given I can always take back. So, I have also plans to review the preceptors' list with brother William Waycott and weed out the unnecessary elements, the non-contributory elements, because I don't want to carry any more dead weight.

Also I find, you know, something I would like to share with you which is a personal thing. I find that the immediate enthusiasm to visit North America is getting less and less. I do not like to visit a place where my heart says, "Why are you going there?" I have put in a lot of time and effort in the last six years. I think I have visited you every year for five years, and obviously it is not giving me some returns and some spiritual growth there. It would be a waste of time for me to continue to come. I believe I am wasting my Master's time.

So, I hope all of you will develop in such a way that I wish to come there every month. I may not be able to come every month, but my heart should long to come and see you all so very much more often. It is like Denmark. I don't wish to go to Denmark at all. Things are going wrong and the problem is nothing more than what you are facing. Problems between people, problems between preceptors, problems between preceptors and abhyasis, couples, problems between husband and wife. It becomes their obsession, their time-consuming obsession, all-consuming obsession, so that they have no time to devote to their own spiritual practice nor to the practice of others. In fact, I spoke very openly two days back in the evening. I said, "I would like to sack the whole preceptors' list and bring a new team into the field." There may be some of the old lot there. That's the way I feel about Denmark. I hope I don't have to feel similarly about the US. I know all of you are well-intentioned, well-meaning, though like children sometimes, obsessed by fancies and desires.

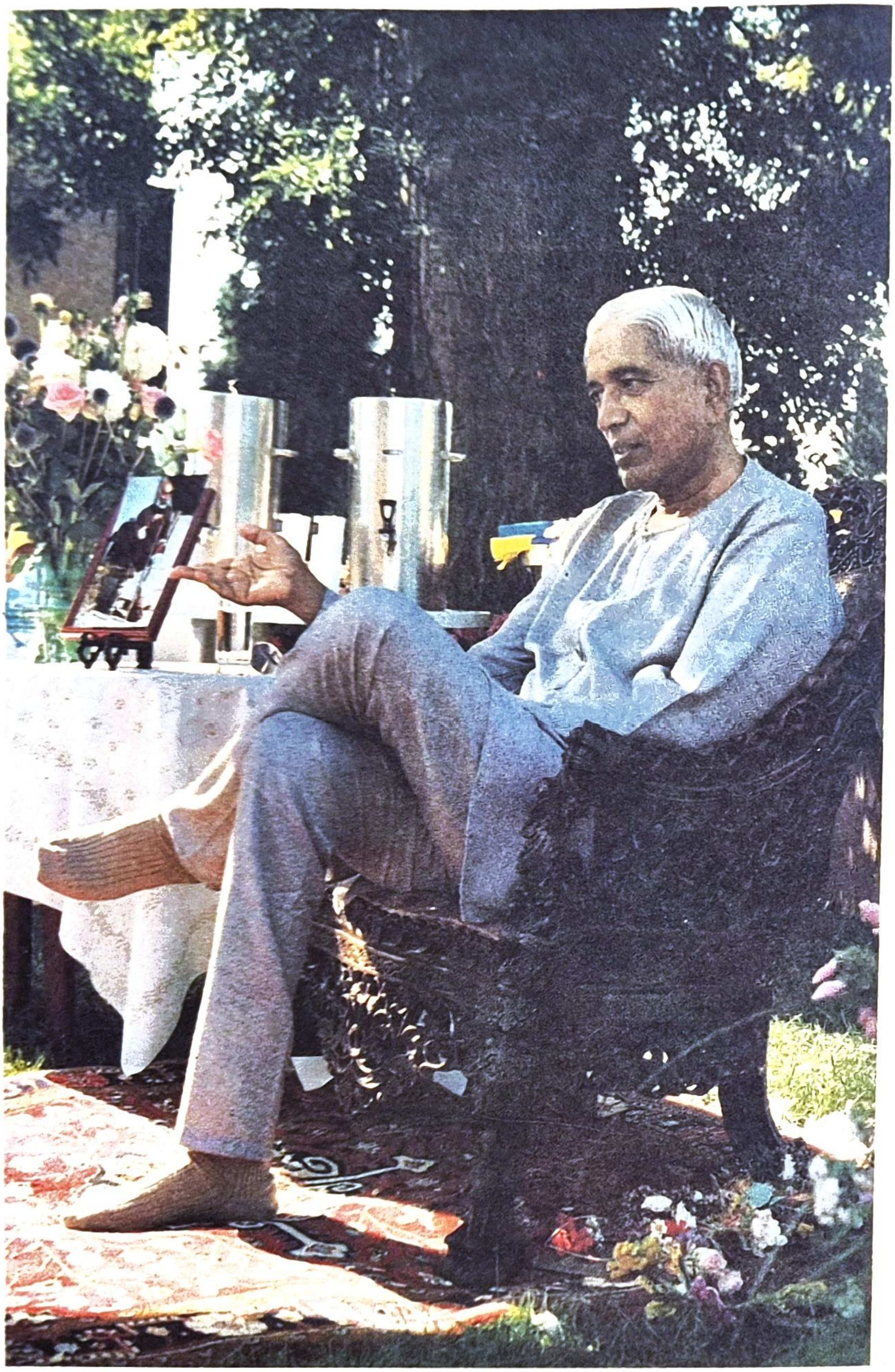
In conclusion, I would like to say there is material in all of you which can be used for your development. I mean, God does not deny this to any human being. The most fallen or the most elevated, both have the same spirit in them. There is no difference. What is the difference? It is the play of the will, the human will, whether it is to be used in the negative tendencies, the negative life, in the life of pleasure, for self-seeking, sensual, or all these things, or it is in the direction of self-development. It is only a question of change of direction. I pray that all of you will fulfil your need for self-development in an honest, sensible, and purposeful manner.

It is not for me you are developing. It is for yourself you are developing. I gain and I lose nothing. For me, there is nothing left to gain. I have nothing to lose. For you, there is everything to gain and a great deal to lose, I would say almost everything to lose, if you are not successful in this adventure.

So, please remember you are working for yourselves, you are striving for yourselves. If you are able to do it sensibly, it will be your achievement for your self, by your self, with the help of the Master. You owe nothing to me. I owe nothing to you. I serve him. If he says, "Go," I go. If he says, "Stop," I stop.

Now you must make him want me to go to you. That is the final conclusion. I hope you will do it. I know you want that I should come again and again, and that the Mission should grow. But just wanting is not enough. You must crave for it, you must long for it. It must become your single-minded obsession. For lack of a better term, I say obsession. You know the word 'magnificent obsession'. This must be the magnificent obsession of your lives. I pray it may be so.

Thank you for your patient hearing.



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CREATIVITY

Geneva, Switzerland

7 August, 1990

When I don't have to speak, I like to speak, and when I have to speak, I don't like to speak! It is also the fear of the, I don't know, microphones, the self [chuckles], and since I have to speak this evening I might as well as have a little practise now.

I wish to say some things about creativity, giving and taking, speaking — a bit of everything. Yesterday we heard some good talks, and something about creativity was said by some people. I had discussed creativity with Babuji. He said, "God is the only creator. We don't create anything." We are only putting together bits and pieces which already exist. A creator is one who produces something from nothing. We are only reorienting existing things and we pretend to be creators. So, I would like us to develop this humility, to come out of a real understanding of what creation is. I would include the creation of babies, too, because the material chemistry creates the body; the soul, which is created by the Lord, gives it life.

While we should try to be creative, because it is an aspect of progressive divinisation of ourselves, we should have the understanding and the humility to recognize the fact that we can never really be creators in that sense. At the human level, of course, there is a lot of creativity in the human sense. The perfection of that aptitude comes when we become selfless. You'll always find that when you are working for yourself, such creativity as we are capable of at the human existence level disappears. I think it is because we are too concerned with the result of what we are trying to do, and this obsession with the result, the fear of our efforts going wrong, they themselves interfere with the result. Therefore, instead of being creative we just become artisans, perhaps, or even less than that.

So, selflessness can lead us to creativity. One who is totally selfless is absolutely creative, and that is the function and the role and the being of the Creator. Therefore, Babuji used to say of God that one can neither say He exists, nor can you say He doesn't exist, because if you look for His existence you don't find it. But if you look at the immense universe that is before us and of which we are part, it is impossible to deny His existence.

So, those of you who are aspiring to be creative should progressively try to become selfless and remove from your mind the idea of satisfaction, progress, and perfection. One who works for perfection rarely achieves perfection. One who just does what he has to do, selflessly, inevitably becomes more and more creative, more and more perfect.

This is the secret, you see, of even a woman cooking. When she cooks with love, thinking of the person for whom she cooks, the food tastes wonderful, though often, in thinking of the beloved whom she is going to feed, she doesn't even know what she is throwing into the pot. When you ask for the recipe, she says, "I don't know. I just had some bags and I put everything together." And you say, "It is wonderful." But when we want to please and we take pots and pans and scrub them and put them through the washing machine and weigh everything, we end up with a disastrous meal, because we are thinking of the self, ourselves. So, this is the secret of creation.

In the beginning we are totally self-centred. Therefore we have no perfection, we have no creativity, therefore our life is a miserable failure, our efforts lack sustained capacity and effort. The only result that we get is frustration. Therefore, when you think of nothing and work, even forgetting that you are doing it for others, you come to the second level of this possibility of creativity, that slowly you are coming to a stage where the idea of creation, effort, something to do, everything fades away. It is now a little more towards divinisation.

What does God create? I don't think He creates anything in one sense, while in the other sense He creates everything. When He takes us, human beings as we are, whom He has already created, He is not going to do anything new with us. I mean, He cannot create something twice. So, to say God creates a saint is stupid. God only renews what he has created, cleans it, polishes it, and restores it to its original condition. I have often said, I mean, attracting some criticism, too, that His creation was finished long ago. I cannot, to my limited understanding and imagination, think of a continuously creating God. His first creation was His only creation and was also His masterpiece — the universe and all that it contains.

Now, like we are born healthy sometimes but as we grow older, systems within our total system begin to fail, to become diseased, sick, and tired, everything that we do is to restore it to the original state of health. All that the medical people do, or we do to ourselves, is restoration. Doctors do not create health. Doctors restore health. You also find this idea of restoration in museums of art, where old paintings have become encrusted with dust and filth, and there are artists doing nothing but removing that filth from the paintings to restore them to their original condition. It needs more expertise, I'm told, to restore an old masterpiece than for a masterpiece to be painted.

So, in this idea, God creates masterpieces and spends the rest of His, I don't know, eternal existence in repeatedly restoring His creation to its original condition. If we are fortunate, one restoration by Him should be enough because you are already here, you see, that restoration is necessary. If we are stupid and don't co-operate, we are like mischievous children. The mother washes the child, changes the dress, half an hour later the child returns filthy to be washed all over again. So, the only co-operation I can imagine is that we should permit him to restore us, and then we remain in that restored condition, which is our original condition.

You know, personalities like Lalaji Maharaj, sometimes people ask, "Why was he born?" Well, it is like, he comes himself to help us. We don't come like that. We come out of compulsive forces of our samskara. We are here by **our** efforts, we shall be there by **his** effort. So, the co-operation is by stopping our efforts altogether and permitting his efforts to grow and grow, and this dual activity or dual response to the situation is what I would like to call surrender. Surrender means two things: not doing anything myself, and simultaneously allowing him to do everything. Now when we die (I am talking of mortal death), we cannot do anything, but nor can we permit him to do anything.

Therefore, Babuji repeats again and again, "In this life you have to earn your liberation." Once you are dead, if you have carried your samskaras with you, coming back to this school all over again is inevitable. Even he cannot stop it. I mean, he can do everything but it is the law. He permits the law to operate. The possibility of suspending even divine laws in our favour exists only when we are still living in this mortal existence. It is tragic that we also have the opportunity to do foolish things and remain here. The one who uses this opportunity to create circumstances by which he or she will remain forever in this world is perhaps the creation of hell for one's own self. The opportunity to leave this life once and for all, by this dying before we die, yet living to permit him to work on us, is the aspect of surrender which makes his work possible and the completion of his work a very definite thing.

So, I think our highest creativity is expressed in allowing him to be the creator and lapsing into some sort of, you know, infinite beatitude ourselves. Let him work on me. We should be like a raw material on which the Master works. When Michelangelo carves out his masterpieces in marble, he is the master. The credit for his creation is his. The rock of marble cannot claim any credit. Now, the idea of claiming credit is also of the ego. So, as long as we want to claim credit for even being made into what Master wants to make us, please remember the ego is still present — you still want a pat on your back or a congratulatory word, and this we should try to do away with.

So, this is about creation, etc. Now, coming to the shower. There is nothing wonderful about a shower. I have found that when we are thinking of the body and its comfort, we work ourselves up into a state where we think without a shower we are going to die. But if you lose your body consciousness the shower becomes, I mean, you don't even think of it any more. I have often had to have a bath to satisfy other people, not because I felt I needed it. That should be a good condition which you should experience.

Of course, in the West there is this idea of comfort, of being in harmony, and things like that. The only comfort for me is when I am within myself, and that is also harmony with my Self. Real comfort is in being in harmony with your Self. But the Western idea of comfort is to be in harmony with your environment, which is destined to fail from the beginning, because the environment is changing all the time. So, how are you going to be in harmony with that? Whereas the Self here is eternal and always the same, immutable, changeless. When I am in tune with that, resting in that, existing in that Self, I can be in a permanent state of harmony. With what? Now that 'what' doesn't exist for me any more.

So, as I said in Augerans when talking about love, etc., everything is in the Self. There is nothing outside. He who seeks outside is doomed to failure. He who seeks within is assured of total success. This is the wisdom of meditation, because in meditation we seek inside ourselves, in the Self that exists already, having been created by the Creator, and we just try to re-establish contact, and then you will come to this mysterious state of being which, when I spoke about love, said that one who is in love, or one who becomes love, doesn't look for love any more, because he **is** love. There is no question of loving.

Like honey becomes honey and everything, you know, ants and bees and everything wants it. They go to where it is. The honey doesn't flow to the bee. Similarly, when you develop this possibility and achieve the possibility of **becoming** love, of **being** love, then people will come to you. But so long as you make yourself attractive, that which you are trying to attract to yourselves instinctively senses a danger in that attraction, because you don't attract people for their sake but for your sake.

I would recommend this wisdom to women especially. Therefore, the more they become attractive or make themselves attractive, those who don't wish to be attracted go away, and only those who can resist that attraction and exploit you come to you, because they know they can destroy you in an instant of time. This is the danger of trying to make yourself attractive. You always attract the wrong people, one who will molest you, one who will attack you, one who will exploit you, one who will destroy you. Therefore, we should never try to be attractive, but as you refine yourself and you become love instead of having hate... [break in tape] that even though you sometimes don't want them, they will not leave you. It is not nice to say that you want peace at that time. Honey cannot have peace. Isn't it? It is there to be consumed. A candle cannot be in the cold. It is there to burn itself to give us light.

Therefore, Babuji Maharaj said, "Saints are not born to enjoy life. They come to be enjoyed." I would think that is the ultimate 'honeymoon' — a combination of illumination and taste — because the full moon has the soft luminous illumination, not harsh, not glaring, gentle, and the honey is the epitome of taste.

So, God gives us light, He makes Himself worth looking for and, I mean, this is just a thought, it is not established fact, I think He creates this enormous universe with all its facets, qualities, to try in some way to attract us towards Himself through any one of these which catches our fancy. It is like you give a child first one toy, then a comic book, then a television set, trying to evoke from it that which you want.

In the beginning this is the bait for the fish. One is attracted through beauty, through fine arts, to the divine beauty and to Divinity itself, to beauty of the divine and to the divine, finally quality-less Divine. Similarly, another through taste, another through touch. I believe each one of these senses has a purpose in guiding us towards Him. Which will attract us, and with which sense we shall use, we do not know. Therefore, yoga says don't destroy the senses, because at what stage which sense will take you to the Lord, you don't know. If your samskara determines that you will be blind, you need the sense of touch.

Therefore, in yoga there is no negative aspect, no deadening of the self, no dulling of the intellect, no destruction of the senses, but a refinement, so that we seek by a refinement of these senses that which transcends the senses. Like you know, when you hear a beautiful piece by Mozart, for instance, and then you continue to enjoy that music in the silence. One who can enjoy music only while it is being played doesn't know real music, but one who can hear a piece once and then hear that music in his soul for all eternity without playing anything again has reached his goal.

Similarly, one who can see once the beauty of this universe and then close his eyes and gaze at that infinite beauty all his life, is at his goal. Therefore, we have this ancient tradition in India that, having seen once, I do not see again. Of course, in its ignorant aspect some of them made themselves blind, too, physically. That is crude, that is stupid, that will not be productive. The real thing is, as Babuji said, that he went to Lalaji, looked at him, and never saw anything else after that.

One can ask, you know, to be argumentative, that, "Did he not see us?", for instance. That was when he came to the lower level, the human level. For him it was a great effort, a veritable misery, but he did it to help us. Then he saw whatever he wanted to see, did what he had to do and then went back into it.

So this is the wisdom that we learn from yoga, Sahaj Marg, that the senses are to be used very much like the periscope of a submarine. If the periscope is always outside it is no more a submarine, it is on the surface. A submarine is not supposed to be on the surface. It only surfaces when it wants to see something.

So, our senses are not to be always outward orientated, as they are at present. They are to be held as reserve possibilities of acquiring a contact with this universe, and put out like a periscope when we wish to know something or need to know something. Then, they are pulled back within yourself and you submerge into the infinite merge of bliss again.

So you see, there is so much wisdom in Sahaj Marg, but when we only talk of the superficial things, meditation, cleaning, and all that, it shows we have not yet gone in deep into the subject. That is why brother Don told you that Babuji, in his books, gives only hints, like a plant gives you a seed, but that seed you have to nurture and develop into another tree. Therefore, human wisdom, human endeavour, human fruition, human perfection depends on how you handle seeds.

For our intellect Babuji gives us seeds of thought; for our spiritual growth he puts himself into us in seed form. If we don't give it the circumstances to germinate and grow, that seed will lie latent and await a future time when its possibility of germinating increases, and it will flower only when we permit it to flower.

The difference between the agricultural part and the spiritual part: there, the seed will be destroyed, either it germinates or it is dead; here, the seed can lie eternally. He who permits it to germinate and flower at once when it is sown by the Master is the saint who reaches his goal at once. He who allows it to lie there perhaps eternally is dooming himself to an eternity in a hell of his own creation.

So, these few thoughts I would like to share with you. They are worth remembering and meditating upon, which incidentally is another aspect of constant remembrance. If I cannot remember him let me remember his words. If I cannot remember his words let me at least try to remember his teaching. If I cannot remember his teaching let me practise what he taught. So you see, at each stage there is a remembrance of a sort. One cannot practise without remembering him, but practising what he taught is not the same as remembering.

For instance, if you give me a beautiful apple *gateau*, I remember the gateau but not you. But somewhere, sometime, if I have a gateau tasting exactly like that, inevitably I will remember you, though I may not remember your name. Your Marcel Proust talks of the Madeleine cake in some similar fashion. So, events are useful only when they can create in us the right memory which can take us to him. Practise must give way to knowledge, must give way to remembrance, must give way for Him.

That is also Master's wisdom, when he says after reaching a particular stage you need not meditate any more. That is why he also says constant remembrance is only a technique, and when you, through your love, have given me permanent residence in your heart, remembrance goes. Not in the sense that we forget, but the need to remember is gone, because He is my Self.

Thank you.

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STILL THE MIND

Geneva, Switzerland
7 August, 1990

I believe that my brother Patrick has told you all about the system. He's the specialist. I prefer to be a generalist, generally. I would like to start with one thing that my Master always emphasized, that he was a silencer. His function was to still the minds of human beings. Today we are so much confused, so much agitated. Everything that we see, everything that we do, everything that we hear, is only inflaming excitement in us. You can say today's life is one of excitement, and if we don't have that excitement we almost seem to suffer from some sort of a withdrawal syndrome, like when an addict is withdrawn from his addiction.

Therefore, today's life is seeking excitement after excitement, and if we cannot find it we are lost. Our minds are keyed up, physical systems are keyed up, and life is nothing but a continuous seeking for excitement, and if you are able to indulge in that excitement you fall like a spent organism, exhausted. This used to be something which was a monthly phenomenon or a weekly phenomenon, but now it is a daily phenomenon. Hardly do people wake up — and they wake up generally without rest, without having had proper sleep; this is something most of you would have found in your experience — and we start the life of excitement all over again. Excitement in our work: thanks to speedier communication, we have hardly any time to think.

I remember when the days of my work started back in 1950. Often, for important questions, we had a week to answer, or sometimes even more, because often we would get a telegram and we need not send a reply until we had the reply ready — even in business. But today you have a telephone, you have a telex, you have the fax, and you cannot hang up, the other man at the other end is waiting for your reply. In the beginning it is very exciting. We feel important that we are at this end with the capacity to determine the destiny of the person in the other end. But slowly it becomes a drudge, it becomes a bore. Then comes a situation like when small children get into this giant Ferris wheel in fairs, and when it is going up they get nausea, they get giddy, they get afraid, but they cannot get out of it until the wheel has come full circle.

So you see, to get into situations is easy, to get out of situations is not in our control. It is like one of these modern inventions, the one-way street. You have all been to strange places, and even though you know where you have to go, sometimes you are spending half an hour going through one-way streets all the time before you are able to come to your destination.

All this is because we have lost the way of controlling ourselves, of regulating ourselves. In fact, we are like clocks where the spring has hardly begun to unwind, and you are winding it up all over again. Sometimes you wind it so tight that the spring breaks. So, we have to unwind ourselves. I remember in my younger days when I was in school, we had clocks which we could wind once a week, big springs, nice pendulums, and today we buy them as antiques.

I was wondering how this clock works. Everybody should have thought about it at some time or the other, but it took a long time, almost till I was sixty years old, for me to discover the wisdom, that the clock which is wound works when the spring begins to unwind itself. The winding is done so that it can unwind and do work. If it cannot unwind to its full extent before it is wound up again, it is useless. Now, in our lives we are winding ourselves up all the time. As I said, we are like clock springs — it has hardly begun to unwind and we are wound up again. That is why I said we are all keyed up all the time.

Raja yoga makes us unwind ourselves. And for its proper functioning, for its effective functioning, it has to depend on that very wise and very truthful finding of the ancients, that everything starts with the mind, and then only comes down into the body as action. Therefore, any system of thought or practice which does not still the mind cannot still your body. No proof is needed, because in modern society, notwithstanding the most comfortable apartments, the most comfortable beds, people cannot sleep. I mean, this is the simplest available proof. I don't think we have to look any further than that. Why can't we sleep? Because, even though the body is at rest, the mind cannot unwind itself. Today's problems carried over into tomorrow, yesterday's problems unsolved, and the fear of tomorrow's problems already brought in today. So, even to sleep properly, the mind has to be stilled. Forget all this business of God realisation and self-realisation. That is very far away from us. Let us start with sleep, good sleep, because if you can sleep tonight, tomorrow you are a better person, more effective, more relaxed, more at rest with yourself and with others, and then you can do your work better.

I say this because, in the Western society, in the Occidental mode of thinking, there is a very unfortunate conclusion that when we meditate we are wasting our time. I hear people say, "You are just closing your eyes and sitting down for an hour or two hours. What do you contribute to the existence of this world? What do you contribute to society?

Do you even contribute something to yourself?" We have to pity this opinion and the people who hold such opinions, because without ever having tried anything, they believe that because your eyes are closed you are useless, you are doing nothing. Yet you have the famous sculpture of Rodin, 'The Thinker', doing nothing. But you Occidentals believe that he is thinking, you see, therefore he is doing something.

This is the, what shall I say, I don't say hypocrisy, because it is not hypocrisy. Such conclusions are drawn by an ignorance which will not transcend itself and become wise. I believe it is out of fear, because when we seek knowledge, and if by God's grace we acquire that knowledge, we become committed to follow that wisdom. Knowledge commits us to a certain line of action. Now, one pities those people who are born ignorant and who cannot have the knowledge because they have no access to knowledge, but don't you think we should pity even more the people who have access to knowledge but refuse it? And don't you think we should pity even more the people who have that knowledge and refuse to use it? The conclusion you can draw yourself.

Therefore, raja yoga starts with the mind. Here comes the great wisdom of the ancient past, that only out of a still mind, absolutely tranquil, can anything creative come out. Modern education, modern life circumstances, with all the compulsions of that life towards success, competitive success — that I must be the first, I must be the richest — imposes enormous tension and strain upon the human system. If I cannot be still at least during the time I have to sleep, both in my mind and in my body, I wake up a little more of a wreck each morning.

Then comes all these modern discoveries: drugs, psychiatrists, alcohol, sex. All these we are trying, not for pleasure or for satisfaction, but to put us into a state of even greater fatigue, where all out of that compulsion of that fatigue we go to sleep. It is fatigue which forces us to sleep, not rest.

Therefore, next morning often we don't wake up. If we wake up, we don't wish to wake up, and then you need pep pills to restore you to some level of modern activity. Children are only caught up in giant Ferris wheels; we are caught up in the Ferris wheel of our own existence, led into that innocent trap by the lures of success, of wealth, of progress, so called.

Today, every time you turn on the radio or the television, you see where that progress and that success and that competitive technology has taken you or is taking you. This is not a political comment, because we have no politics in our system. It is a comment on the human system, the human situation, where success, progress, power, in the hands of a manic can destroy the world. Therefore, the ancient yogic wisdom says, give success, give progress, give knowledge, give power only to the wise, who are wise not because they have mastered the *bibliotheques* of this world, but whose wisdom lies in the ultimate conquest of themselves.

Therefore, yoga says the ultimate mastery is the ultimate conquest of your own self. It is easy to conquer outside things. It is easy to train a dog; it is even easy to train lions, ferocious beasts, meat-eating beasts. They can be trained to open their mouths and you put your head into it, and they will not bite. We have all seen this as children at the circuses; but today we have the opposite phenomenon, that even when a human being opens his mouth, he is biting at us. Educated human beings, cultured human beings, powerful human beings, rich human beings, well dressed, immaculately coiffured, etc. — they open their mouths only to bite. To bite at our property, to bite at our wealth, eventually to bite at us. The human has become the modern predator. The cats, the big cats, the small cats, they are no more in the picture, poor things.

So you see, more than ever before, we need the stilling of the mind today. People are always asking us, "What is the relevance of raja yoga to modern times?" When we talk of science and technology, the word 'modern' implies progress, but when I apply it to the times, the word 'modern' only seems to show lapse of time. No progress in that time. If there was progress, human beings should have become gentler, softer, capable of generosity, of love, of affection, of giving way to others, in the understanding that if they are successful, I am also successful. But if I am the only person successful and they are all beggars, I am living in a society where I am going to be plundered every moment of my life. But these values have gone, you see. These values have been lost.

Why we call modern times as modern times, I don't know, because, though we have progressed enormously in the fields of science, fundamental research, technology, human progress has not kept pace with that. I submit this is sufficient reason to claim that raja yoga is never more relevant than today, and if we go on this way its relevance and its need increases day by day. It is not surprising that in modern big industrial houses they are now starting to teach yoga. Not that it is always good, not that it is always effective, because they really don't know what yoga is. In fact, these big corporations are treating yoga like toilets: quiet, clean, impeccable. But do they do anything for us? This we have to examine carefully.

But it is a good beginning that even commercial people, people who are only looking for money and power, are beginning to recognize the need to be still at least for half an hour during lunchtime, and of spending money to provide a place for it. In many major airports they are now providing space for meditation. Wisely, I would say, because given the chaos nowadays prevailing in airports — missed flights, lost baggage — it is a service the airlines are doing to themselves, not so much to us as passengers. This only emphasizes even the greater need for us to look after ourselves.

Raja yoga does not need any place specially prepared for it. The first requirement is that I be willing to do it. The second requirement, that I be with my Self. Now, most of you may be inclined to laugh at this statement. You may ask, "Am

I not with my Self?" Raja yoga says no. Because if you were with your Self, you would perhaps be a saint long ago, and had you made that goal that we are seeking, you would not be even here to say it. The successful man is the silent person, in the sense that he no longer speaks, and often he is not here to speak to us at all.

Here comes the parody of human existence, that we are always fighting and quarrelling with ourselves. My Self-Self tells me something, and the other me is my ego self. Yoga says you have no external enemies, there are no external problems, there are no friends outside yourself, also. The wealth of the universe is not outside, but inside. Bring these two selves together and you are that which you should be.

So you see, it is really an integration of the higher Self with the lower self, and therefore I said, I must be with my Self. Willingness is the first requirement. The second is to be with my Self. When I have these two things I can sit in a chair like this in an airport and get into myself and am lost to this world. I am lost to this world but not lost to my Self. Now I am available to the world but lost to my Self. Which would you like to be? This is a question you have to ask yourself. Because, if you are just happy with being available to the world, but lost to your Self, you will become that which in biblical terms they call the lost wandering soul. Someday we are lost, then we are lost both to the outside world and to ourselves.

Yoga says be true to yourself, be available to yourself, and if this Self and this self are in harmony and are in unison in their motives, in their aspirations, in their achievements, then you are more available to the universe than you have ever been before, or you can ever have been before. Of such a person you can say, that he is a stillness which creates activity. His is the lapsed mind, the silent mind, which you call the ignorant mind, which creates all wisdom. Without really living, he creates life for others.

This is the marvellous mystery of yogic science, of the scientific, saintly existence, where he doesn't any more learn science or master science but becomes a science himself. He **becomes** knowledge. He no longer knows but he is knowledge. He doesn't love any more. He becomes love. He doesn't exist any more but he is existing all the time. This definition fits God. Therefore, we say of the highly elevated aspiring yogic souls, whom you call saints, that of course they cannot be God, but they are godly, they are divine, and in the absolute stillness and the silence of their being, they are masters of creation. I deliberately used the word being because it is no longer an existence. An existence is in time; it has a beginning, a middle and an end. We **exist**, but they **are**. Not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow — they **are**.

This is the miracle of human transformation that raja yoga especially offers, and which my honourable, revered Master, Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur refined for us and created for us. This system of Sahaj Marg, as we call our system of yogic meditation, which makes all this possible given only three requirements: that I am willing, that I am willing to be with my Self, and I am prepared to be with my Self all the time. I am now, in a sense, liberated from this world but I am not free from this world, because for such a person his responsibilities are enormous. Having made himself and entered into a state of being in which he **is**, in which you can call him as eternal, though it is not the correct word, it becomes his duty to do it for us, to offer it to us, to help us to achieve it, too.

So, I wish to emphasize this little difference, that the masters are liberated but not free. Unfortunately, we think freedom is liberation and liberation is freedom. Not at all. On the contrary, liberation imposes upon us the divine duty of loving all creation, and because of that love, wanting, longing, craving to help everything that is in our presence. Yogis do not recruit disciples; they recruit themselves in your service. A yogi is a one man universal army longing to protect you, longing to help you grow, prepared to dedicate his whole existence to that.

So, it would be a mistake that masters come and preach to you to have more members for their mission, or anything like that. Even ordinary schools exist not for themselves but for the students they have to train. Teachers and professors exist similarly, to train people who come to them. True creativity can emerge only when you think of the other and not of yourself, because if you are concerned with the result of your work, the possibility of failure is what stands up before us, rarely of success. And that spectre of failure which confronts us whenever we start something makes us weak, makes us impotent.

So, there is a wisdom in not thinking of the result. It is based on the larger wisdom and the divine law, that right action must lead to right result. Otherwise God is a lie, the universe is a lie, we are lies. This is the truth which yoga holds up before us. If you search for success you are failures, because you are working for yourself. One who works for himself is worse than a man who carries your baggage in the airport. He may be paid for it, but at least he is working for you. Here you are a servant of yourself whereas, as I said before, you should be the master of yourself.

So you see, the ideas of progress, of success, of wealth, enslave us in our own bondage. It is too facile, too easy to blame society for this. We must ask ourselves, “Why am I a slave of that society?” Nobody compels it. We have always the right and the ability to break free from any bondage, but unfortunately people are trying this, either in running away from society or in drugging themselves to insensibility, seeking it in transient and ephemeral pleasures, and the spectre of failure grows larger and larger. If we allow this to continue, we see that unfortunate end — in suicide.

So you see, we have not to be servants of ourselves, we have not to pamper ourselves, because then I am that crazy thing, I am my own child, feeding myself with chocolates, alcohol, trying to still myself into some stupid oblivion, and this leads to another sort of craziness. The self must master the self, one by denial, discipline. I must be able to refine myself into such a state of being that I need no more inputs into myself to sustain myself. But today we are gluttons in every field, more and more consumption of everything that we can possibly consume, including our friends, our lovers, our wives, our husbands. We no longer live with them, we consume them. Therefore, you have this modern tragedy of couples breaking up, friendships breaking up, marriages breaking up, because people are running away. When you start consuming them they don't go any more with you.

My Master once said that the best example of a spiritually elevated personality like himself is the candle. It burns itself to give us illumination. Now, we are burning others to give us illumination. So, it is my Master's message to you: please be brave enough and capable enough, aspiring enough to destroy yourselves if necessary, in this gentle burning of your self, which achieves two things. You are burning in a fire which is not going to consume you but which is going to refine you, and simultaneously you are giving illumination to so many.

This is the life of the aspirant who aspires and achieves and, as my Master said of the saint, he does not appear in this world to enjoy it, but he comes to be enjoyed. Otherwise it is like a pot of honey which wants to enjoy the human being. Honey is sweet, but we enjoy it. Everything in this world hinges upon this aspect of existence. The saint epitomizes the ultimate sacrifices. Talking merely in human terms, he sacrifices comfort, pleasure, satisfaction, even his own life. But then, in one grand finale of this existence, he finds himself, and in finding himself he finds he has achieved the goal of human perfection, which we call divinisation.

I request all of you to give it a trial because, I repeat for the third time, that more than ever today you need mental stillness, mental calm. Mental calm, not drug-induced, not because your mind has become desensitized by pleasure and indulgence, but like a beautiful pool in the heart of a jungle — still because it is deep. This is the ultimate truth, that today's minds are like bubbling brooks, very good to look at, useful objects for poets to rhapsodize themselves in, but because they contain sometimes only one centimetre of water, they make all that noise about which poets rave in their ecstasies.

Therefore, you have the proverb, "Still waters run deep." I would like to add a new proverb: "Still minds are the deepest." And when it is deep there is creativity in it, there is peace in it. You cannot even bathe in a bubbling brook. Even to bathe we need a deep pool. And the ultimate bath, from which we can come out totally relaxed, totally refreshed like a newborn babe, is the plunging into your own Self, but first that depth must be instilled in you, created in you, by resorting to meditation.

It is like digging a well. You remove all the rubbish until the still and clear waters of life you are able to see in yourself. This is the immortality that we seek. It is the rest that we can get. It is the creation that we are permitted to create. When man tries to create in the external world new planets and new this and new that, there is disaster. But when you seek to create the whole of creation in yourself, the entire universe in yourself, you become that great and enormously beautiful, magnificent creation of which it is said even gods can be proud.

Thank you.

(Talk given at public meeting.)

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SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS-LESS

Geneva, Switzerland
9 August, 1990

I have been wanting to write Volume II of *My Master* for a long time. In fact, I had the idea in 1965. I told Babuji about this thought. He said, "It will be very easy, but how will you start?" And that book has not yet been written. So, the beginning is always difficult, and when we know how to begin, most of the work is done. Like we say, "Well begun is half done." But now when I want to end things, I also seem to hear Babuji saying, "How are you going to end it?" So, well begun is half done, the other half has to be completed only when it is well ended. A beginning and end are both important.

We start seminars with a great deal of enthusiasm and expectation, and if the seminar is long enough, generally they fade out, I mean the enthusiasm and the expectation, so that the ending becomes something of an anti-climax. So, the tempo has to be maintained throughout, and when we realise that the ending of one seminar is only the beginning of the next, we are able to understand the wisdom that the tempo has to be always maintained. So, there can be no letting up in our efforts during any stage of our sadhana. In this there is no time for rest, no time for relaxation. The work itself must become our rest and it must be our relaxation.

I think this is what Babuji implied when he said, "Work as if you are playing." We have to love this so much that, without thinking of the results, we become involved in it, because we are part of it, it is part of us. I think this is also the aspect of karma yoga which says, "Don't think of results." If we are able to maintain this tempo unbroken, we are like that tortoise which goes slowly but steadily to its destination. Whereas the rabbit went to sleep and was beaten by a mere tortoise.

So, my request to you is not to give up, under the impression that our journey is ended. Surely the seminar is ending, but not our spiritual voyage to our destination. It is these gaps which are important, you see, between one spurt of effort, one burst of effort, and the next burst of effort there is a gap, there must be a gap, but what we do with that gap in time is the most important.

For instance, I have often thought about how we write. For instance, you have groups of letters of the alphabet which form words. If you go on writing without spaces, it will not make any sense; therefore we leave a space between words. To my mind, that space is more important than the words themselves. That is how we manipulate the alphabet of a language. We build a house; it is the space inside that is important, not the walls and the curtains and the roof. If the space is not properly created we find we are wasting our time, effort, money.

When we meditate, we are similarly creating space within ourselves. We are emptying a heart which is filled up with all the rubbish in this world, unnecessary thoughts, unnecessary memories, experiences better forgotten. Then, when we are able to create that space in a spaceless space, we find it being occupied by one who has no space, but nevertheless requires space. So, this is the miracle of spaceless space, timeless time, and all these opposites of Sahaj Marg. Therefore, to handle our leisure period is more important than knowing how to handle our work periods.

This wisdom the West has not understood, because here you are workaholics. You know how to work, but you do not know how to work without working. This is the wisdom of the East. Therefore, I have often remarked that, especially in the American countries when they reduce their working days and working time, everything goes haywire, because the people who are given leisure were not trained to handle leisure. What are we to do with the time that we save? It is more difficult than knowing what to do with the money we save. It is more difficult even than to know what to do with the space we are saving.

So you see, doing is fairly easy but to utilize the space of time between doings is the really important activity of our life. It is the same with sleep. It is the same with periods between thinking, when we have to just sit and allow the inner mental activity to go on without conscious approach when we relax. Therefore, we have the difference between thinking, contemplation, and meditation. Thinking is still an activity, and very often we do not know how to think. Thinking goes this way or this way. Contemplation, too, can be a difficult thing because again there is a certain aspect of mental control over our own conscious activities.

But, in meditation it is most difficult, because here there is a letting go totally, and this happens when we go into deeper meditation and we say we plunged into the depths of our selves. Therefore, meditation is the most difficult thing. For those who have been able to do it, it is absurdly easy, for those who are not able to do it, it is enormously difficult, because we have got used to this absurd activity, which activity we have elevated to some level of divinity itself, and which is reflected in that absurd proverb, "Work is worship." I offer this to you as a suggestion of the absurdity of this whole proverb, and I would introduce a new proverb in its place: "Meditation is worship." Meditation is worship of the Self. When we think of these things in these ways, I am reminded of the modern miracle of communication especially, using fibre optics, lasers, what have you, and the modern telephone communications, where many people speak and the gaps between one person's speech in words is filled up with the gaps of another person's speech, putting more and more together.

So you see, the gap-filling is a very important thing. When we cook, we are filling the empty space in our pots. How we fill it and with what we fill it will determine the quality of the food. Next empty space is our stomachs; how we fill it and with what we fill it determines our health. And the most important is this empty space which we create in our heart. How we fill it and with what we fill it is eternally important, vitally important, because if you fill it with the same rubbish that we have thrown out of it in making it empty, we might as well not have gone to the trouble of emptying it out at all.

So, those who meditate must be always alert to see that what they have thrown out does not come back inside again. I believe because of this problem only, most people who meditate are not successful. The same thoughts, the same prejudices, the same lies, the same passions, the same attachments. What is the use? So, we have to be very alert. Otherwise, we are going to have garbage cans in our houses which we are filling up after throwing out, filling it up with the very same garbage again and again, and what happens is now that it is not only garbage which comes in, but the container itself becomes filthy.

Now, from this I would like to make some comments on what we should do with these interim states between seminars, between meditation sittings. The most effective and the most beautiful and the most simple technique has been given to us by my Master, and that is constant remembrance. We achieve all this without doing anything, by the simple act of remembering him all the time.

Here I would like to interpose a comment on what our sister said about her experience, that she tried to think of others. At a human level it is good, of course. People in this world praise us for thinking of others before thinking of ourselves, but spiritually it may not be so desirable. Now, if you think of selfishness and selflessness, I believe selflessness really means losing the consciousness of the lower self. Throw it away, because the higher Self is eternal, permanent, and which is what should be there. So selflessness does not mean I don't think of eating before others, or I served others before I serve myself — not at all. That is an artificially imposed etiquette. It has no purpose except to fool other people into thinking that such a person is selfless. Here selflessness means self-consciousnessless.

So you see, many words have many meanings. And here also, how is it possible to be selfless under all circumstances when it is obvious that the lower self is what we are referring to, and when it is even more obvious that the more you try to forget it, the more difficult it is to forget that lower self? The technique, again, is to ignore the self, which is, of course, more easily said than done. Here again constant remembrance comes to help us. When we remember Him we are not remembering ourselves any more. He is at the same time the Master whom we remember. He is also the higher Self in us, which now we begin to remember, and He is also the God whom we have to remember.

So, constant remembrance makes possible all these three things at one stroke. It makes us selfless, it makes us constantly remember Him, God, and my Self all in the same time, and this combination makes it possible for me to identify the three as one, makes it possible for me to realise that God, Master, my higher Self are all one. Then I understand that God realisation, realisation of the Master, Self-realisation all are one thing. We are able to read the great triumvirate of existences into one grand synthesis. Now there is no more difference between my higher Self, my Master, and my God. And most important, it prevents us from filling this inner space with anything other than Him.

So like this, if we go on we arrive at some sort of a tentative conclusion, that between any two periods or bursts of activity, the only right sadhana is constant remembrance. Here I include meditation, cleaning, everything, you see, they are also activities. So, I recommend this to all of you, and please don't leave behind everything you got here, but make sure you take your achievements and your positive things with you. This is very much a caution, like you find in railway trains, etc.: please make sure you have your belongings with you. I do not use the word 'baggage' because baggage can be in so many senses. 'Belongings' is a better word, in the sense that it identifies something that really belongs to me. What really belongs to me is my Self, not my body, not my health, not my wisdom, not my stupidity, nothing that can be associated with this temporal life belongs to me in that sense. So, now we are able to identify our belonging.

I here introduce a new understanding of Sahaj Marg to myself — that belongs to me, to which I belong. Everything else is not mine, nor can I ever be its. So you see, we have to bind ourselves into such a link of relationship with the Master that I can say, with confidence born out of an immense love for him, that he belongs to me and I belong to him. It's no use saying he thinks of me, I think of him, he laughs at me, I laugh at him, he loves me, I love him — all this is crazy, all this is useless. They are all tentative, temporary relationships. The ultimate state, when he can say, "He is mine, therefore I am his." See? This is what we have to achieve. This, again, is only a tentative conclusion but it is a very, very advanced way, advanced level on our path, because after that the only thing left for us to achieve is now that neither he is there nor I am there. In a sense, everything in the empty space becomes itself empty. It is like two vacuums merging together to create a vacuum.

Here, perhaps, I would like to share a story with you. It is from that *Dune* series of Frank Herbert, where on the planet Arakis you have what are called sandworms and this fellow Leto, I think, the boy finds out the secret that when he allows these sandworms to attach themselves to him, in a sense he becomes immortal. Of course, it is only a science fiction story, but it contains a hidden idea that, instead of serving others, imagining them to be others because you are again dividing yourself from those whom you serve, allow them, in a sense, to leach upon you. Not in the lower sense of bloodsuckers, but some sort of symbiosis, no more separation. Help them to serve themselves through you.

This has two very important benefits, that you no longer have the pride and the arrogance of saying, "I am serving them." This is a very great danger in those who serve people, who serve others, because I have found this even in the outwardly most humble people, that they have an enormous ego and an enormous pride in their service, which sometimes ordinary people like us don't have. To serve with a sense of our consciousness of serving is perhaps a higher evil than being selfish. This is a suggestion for you all to consider very seriously.

Secondly, it separates the server from the served. And if you happen to be in the position of a Master, who serves, or is supposed to serve, enormous numbers of people, you can understand how high that ego can become, that pride can become. So, the server must not have the idea that he is serving. Nor must those who are served be allowed to feel that they are being served, because in them arises the consciousness, "Oh, I am being served. I have to be obliged. I have to be thankful." Nonsense!

Our relationship must be like that of a plant which takes everything from the soil and the air, but the plant has no consciousness. The air has no consciousness that it is being used by the plant. The soil has no consciousness that its minerals and wonderful things are being taken away by the roots of the plant. It becomes a unified existence of many things, as one single existence. To us it is three, but for that system it is one.

So you see, we have also to develop this feeling, that one who serves, serves without consciousness of service because he loves, he is love. Those who receive the service receive it joyfully, with love, without consciousness of having received any service. If this is achieved, the dangers of egotism, arrogance, pride, will not exist. Then there is no danger in building ashrams, there is no danger of money coming into the temple, because who gives money and who receives money?

It is like the soil. It doesn't give magnesium and potassium. It gives itself. The roots of the plant don't take magnesium and potassium. Nature takes out of that nature what it needs for itself, and when the plant gives carbon dioxide and takes oxygen, the air is not conscious that it is being polluted. It does not say, "Don't take my oxygen. Don't take my oxygen. You are giving me rubbish in the way of carbon dioxide." Because the air is composed of all these things. For the air there is no oxygen, there is no carbon dioxide. To the illuminated soul, elevated soul, there must be no consciousness of virtue and vice, of wealth and poverty, of ashrams and no ashrams.

In this sense, if I may boldly assert something here, many saints have been found lacking, because when you say, like many saints have said, that the female form should be totally covered, even the toe should not be visible, they are as afraid of the female form as the other one who is tempted to look at it without any covering — the voyeur, as you say. Both are making the same mistake. Unfortunately, because we are all suffering from these petty temptations, we praise the stupid fellow who eschews everything, not realising the dangers inherent in such prohibitions.

Freedom must be real freedom, not tied up in opposites. I would not say, “He is free who is no longer being tempted.” The true freedom is when there is no consciousness of temptation. The real truth is when you are no longer conscious of the truth itself. It must be like the innocence of children. They don’t know the difference between truth and lies, because for them it is to say what is to be said and that is all. We make the training available to them how to tell lies. A telephone for Daddy; Daddy does not want to speak and he says, “Tell him I am not available or I am not at home.” If the child says, “But Daddy, you are here,” often the child can be beaten into telling lies.

So you see, there is no such thing as fearlessness in my understanding of Sahaj Marg. There is neither consciousness of fear nor of anything else. I must exist, reacting naturally and spontaneously to circumstances as I must. Therefore, prohibitions, inhibitions, supports are all false to me, because as long as you need something to hold yourself with, walking sticks, you are unstable. The vicious man requires the support of his vices, the moral man is lost without the support of his morality.

Please don’t imagine that I am saying morality is not necessary or important. We start off with a consciousness of sin and immorality, then by sadhana we grow into a state of being where morality and truth become natural, no longer forceful, no longer effort. But few rise beyond this level. There are yet levels beyond, and the next level is where you are not conscious of what you are. The first step in achieving this, the only technique which can help you to achieve this is, again, constant remembrance. Because, if you are remembering constant remembrance or remembering Him in your constant remembrance, you cannot think of the beer which is tempting you or of the liaison that awaits you. Everything is finished.

So, this is the grandest technique, the most effective technique, about which unfortunately we are always talking, but unfortunately we don't practise. I would suggest that, as a fitting termination of this seminar, we should now go into the practise of constant remembrance in a very serious way. Then you find that next time, when we meet again, you are not even conscious that it is a seminar; it is a continuation of the same thing again and again. It is a continuation of a way of life, and when that constant remembrance becomes something naturally established in us, we have now come to a state of divine consciousness, without consciousness of this or that, this world or that world.

Such a person is truly liberated because, as many saints have said, "Even to strive for the other world is a sin." What is wrong with this world that I have to seek another world to find myself in? Truly beautiful women never look in the mirror, should not look in mirrors. It is only your insecurity which makes you look into the damn things. So, it is only our insecurity here, our misery here, which makes us think of a brighter world. If I can transform myself, my brightness, my brighter world is here. Otherwise, we would be like a candle looking for light.

This is the tragedy, that instead of giving we want to receive, and as long as we want to receive and not to give, there can be no success in any form of life, in any sphere of life. Now if we are to think of these things, how can I give and not receive, again the serving and the server, the lover and the beloved, all these ridiculous things come into play. Everything goes with constant remembrance. So, I pray that all of you will make a resolution to get into a state of constant remembrance, and then don't break it to sit in meditation. That would be absurd, because Babuji Maharaj has said time and again that when constant remembrance becomes established there is no more meditation, there is no more cleaning.

So, it would be unfortunate if you forced yourself to stop remembering Him and to meditate, because after all, in meditation also you are only meditating upon Him, so the difference between the meditative state and the non-meditative state is abolished. I end with this prayer, that He may bless all with this capacity to remember Him, to love Him, to become like Him, and finally to merge with Him.

Thank you.

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SEE INSIDE

Brussels, Belgium
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It is very difficult to speak about the Master, because he is largely unknown, and largely unknowable. In fact, I think we can define spirituality as a search in the Master to know the unknowable in him. It is a continuing search. In the beginning we see him in his physical form. Unfortunately, that's all most people see. Not because there is nothing to see, but because we don't wish to see further. So, many people come to see him and go away, because we have this habit of judging from the externals and not bothering to penetrate inside to see what is there. This inability or unwillingness to go inside has many consequences. It makes us look only at the outside.

We have the modern packaging industry, which hides a product under a very nice cover, very expensive sometimes. I sometimes buy a few pins and a few buttons for my shirt, and I have the conviction that they cost less than the package in which they are wrapped up for me. This is also the problem with human beings, in many of us, if you don't mind my saying so, the outside is very attractive, but there is not much inside.

So, spirituality says we have to develop the ability to see inside. For this reason most Masters hide themselves inside, under simple exteriors, nothing to attract, no education, nothing in fact which we can associate with their being a Master. Therefore, we have to search, and if somebody goes to a Master and expects that the Master will expose himself, it is a very crude approach, very ignorant approach, and an approach doomed to failure. It is not the Master's fault, nor is it the fault of the one who goes to see him. It is a question of what you are looking for. Unfortunately, modern education, modern technology, modern science, makes us focus on the outside.

We buy a book looking at the cover; we buy magazines looking at the glossy pictures. In fact, those of you who have been in America will understand that they have those beautiful big cars, and they are some of the most uncomfortable cars ever produced. I used to find the old Volkswagen, the Beetle, difficult to get into but very easy once you are inside. The modern cars are very easy to get into, but very, very uncomfortable inside. I think in our human relationships we have the same problem. Today it is very easy to form an attachment to other human beings, even the so-called love affairs, *"les affaires de coeur."* But there is no comfort, there is no joy, and there is no love.

So you see, something which is very easy to get into generally has very little inside. *Par contra*, often that which is very difficult to get into is perhaps the most valuable thing. Therefore, we have to change our attitude of looking, and stop looking at the outside by trying to look inside. Therefore, a Master cannot be judged when you meet him for the first time; he cannot be known even after years of association, and if you are fortunate we may know him when we become like him.

Spirituality is a process. It has nothing to do with knowledge and the intellect. Because it is a process, we have to have faith, we have to have effort, and it takes time. One may say, "But what about those saints who became instant saints?" They had developed somehow the capacity to plunge into the heart of the individual. Anyone who has a similar capacity is capable of doing it in an instant of time. How much time this journey into the infinite recesses of the Master's heart will take depends on us. Therefore, when people ask us, "How long will it take?" we have really no answer, because it depends on you. It can be this moment; if it is unfortunate, it may never be. All this knowledge is enshrined in a Master.

My Master was a very special example, a very fragile human being, very soft, very tender, like a flower. One does not expect a flower to be hard and strong. Flowers made of stone and marble, yes, but not the natural flowers; they are the softest things. Therefore, you say, 'soft as a petal', you see, they exude a fragrance, and it is that fragrance which goes out into the atmosphere and attracts. In fact, a special person like my Master is described in the Vedas as a flower of the tree which blooms in the night. It is there, but one cannot see it. One does not even see the tree on which it is blooming. But if you have a sensitive nose, and you follow that nose, inevitably you come to the tree and to the flower.

So, it is not something to be seen, it is not something to be touched, it is not something to be tasted. Because, though flowers are soft, not all soft things are flowers. Flowers have fragrance, but not all fragrant things are flowers. Flowers are tender, but not all tender things are flowers. You may think this is obvious; it is not so obvious. Otherwise we would not be looking for soft things, tender things, fragrant things in anything except flowers. We look for these things in perfumes, in the hair of women, in their lips, you know, in satin, in silk. But we buy a flower for ten francs and drop it on the road. It is a tragedy of modern existence, of the culture of the West, that we have to cut a flower from its parent plant to admire it, and to possess it.

Every act of possession is dismembering the beauty of the thing which we want to possess. Therefore, possessiveness is bad, whether it is material for wealth, whether it is the possessiveness of a wife for the husband, or the husband for the wife, or the mother for her children, or even of a guru for his disciples. Where there is possessiveness, there is death, there is destruction. Not for the thing itself, because the thing is always destroyed, but for the soul which is inside. Therefore, all possessiveness is destructive.

Similarly, a disciple cannot be possessive of his master. There is no use in saying, "I have a master, he is my master." It is like having a fish in a tank at home, or a beautiful flower, and saying, "Look at my beautiful flowers." They are not mine, because the moment I cut them they are dead. You know, when a human being dies, the hair continues to grow for some time, the nails continue to grow for some time, but one does not say he is still alive. It is in that sense we have dead flowers at home, not living flowers.

Similarly, when we cut a human being from his environment, from his family, and say, "You are mine. You cannot go out, you should not do this, you should not do that," we have, psychologically speaking, dead girlfriends, dead boyfriends, dead husbands, dead wives, dead children. You have their bodies but not their souls. Spirituality teaches us to have the soul, never the body. The body is gone, the body has to go. So what is the use of loving bodies? Even if it is the Master.

This was the tragedy of many past associations with masters and disciples, that even disciples with great faith, great trust, great love for their master, were disillusioned when the master died a physical death. They say, "How can he be divine? He is dead." What a tragedy. Whose tragedy? It is the disciple's tragedy. Similarly, when a husband loves his wife and, God forbid, the wife dies before him, if he weeps and wails and beats his breast and says, "My wife is dead," it is another tragedy. When he looks for another woman, it is a bigger tragedy, and if he finds fulfilment in her and forgets his wife, it is the biggest tragedy. If there is true love, the form does not matter, because my form is as fragile and as destructible as yours. Who goes first is not important.

I often wonder, in the West you have this wonderful etiquette of allowing women to go first, ladies first. How far does it apply? Are you willing to let your wife go first in the spiritual way? Will you permit her to walk ahead of you to the goal, the absolute goal of human existence? We find it is not so. They are jealous, they are afraid, and of course the male ego, that he must be first, not his wife. Where is love? Where is the love between them?

In love there is no first, there is no second. Love can only be between equals. I mean, I can love my dog, but I cannot love a dog like I love my wife. It is crazy to say I love my dog, I love my cat, you see, it is the disease of a society in which we are no longer able to love people, human beings. These pets and these toys have become objects, pseudo-objects of our pseudo-loves. Therefore, we buy expensive things which have no use, just because my ego is supported by my possessions. People buy books which they never read.

All this has to be reversed, and when one finds a Master, like I found my Master, it is always a shock. Because, like everybody else suffering from an intellectual education, I too went to my Master, prepared to see a giant physically, a giant intellectually, and a giant in every way. What I found was a small man, very weak, very fragile, not with much education. He had only a few years in school. So the first exposure was one of shock. Now, I don't know whether it is his grace or my blessing that I continued with him, because most people would have gone at once. The thought came to me that, "He cannot even help me to cross the street; how is he going to take me to my goal there?" So you see, such doubts are dangerous. Therefor,e we choose tall men, strong men, educated men, and much to our regret, we find that their bodies are full, and their heads are full, but their hearts are empty.

It is like one of those famous stories in one of the Upanishads, of an *asura* and a *deva*, the opposite types of human beings, one totally demonic, diabolical, and the other divinised. They go to heaven to look for the vessel of immortality, the vessel which contains the nectar of immortality — *umbrata*, we call it — that which makes you immortal, deathless. And there is one gold pot, and a mud pot. The deva, because he was a cultured being, allowed the asura to go first. The asura was very happy. He went to the gold pot and took it away. It contained some very potent wine of the gods which made the asura even more crazy than he was before. The mud pot contained the nectar of immortality. So you see, this is how we have to see, from the content and not from the container.

My Master was such an example. Intellectual people found him not intellectual and, unfortunately, the shallowness of their intellectuality was proved when most of them left him without even speaking to him. No library, no books, no newspapers, and he could not speak much on anything. He only spoke of reality and divinity. Somebody asked him, “What is reality?” He said, “Reality is reality.” People laughed and went away.

So, this is the tragedy of the intellect, that the intellect is useless to judge such a person in such a situation. What is it useful for? It must be useful for something. Well, it is useful for your daily work, it is useful for scientific research, but not for the deeper values of life. I have not seen any intellectual so far who is happy. I have met many of them, very high intellectuals, respected in their societies, honoured in their societies, and when they are outside they are wearing their nice suits and their ties, and they look very happy and nice. But when I get them alone, they are like a mouse before a lion. They don’t know what they are doing; their intellect is a failure. They have the same problems like a beggar has; they have the same couple problems, the same problems of love affair, the same drug problem, the same alcohol problem. And they have one very big extra problem which a poor man does not have: they have to play a part of being a professor, or research chemist, or something, and this acting is of enormous strain on them, you see, Jekyll and Hyde. So, you see how much we have to pay for these things.

Now, when I found my Master, I found him always relaxed. He was not playing any part; he did not pretend to be intellectual. When somebody asked him, "What is God?" He said, "Only God can be God." Very self-evident answers. But when you go deeper, not so self-evident, because children think their fathers are gods, wives up to a particular stage think their husbands are gods. But inevitably we come to a stage when that thing falls and breaks. Then we understand that while God can be your father, your father cannot be your God; God can come as your lover, but your lover cannot be God; God is all knowledge, but knowledge is not God.

So, you see the necessity of understanding this inversion of values. I could understand all this only from my Master. In a sense, I am also very well educated. The books I have read and the money I have wasted on them is enormous. I used to tell many, many of my friends that I have only one vice — books. I was proud of it, like most of us are proud of our vices, because we have nothing else to be proud of. Then I understood that all this was a waste of time, a waste of money, a waste of effort. Because in looking at that man, my Master, I understood, or at least I began to understand, reality of the form, the reality of the intellect, I should perhaps say, the comparative reality of the form, the comparative reality of the intellect, and finally I had a glimpse of the Absolute Reality of His presence.

That presence is something which you must feel to understand, because for us, when a person is physically absent, he is absent; we can never feel the presence of an absent person. Therefore, we are lonely. Therefore, we seek company. Therefore, we leave our homes and go to clubs and pubs and whatnot. Now, if you could train yourself to recognize the real presence of any human being… You don't have to be a master to do it, nor is it right to say that only the Master has a separate presence apart from his physical presence.

When you put a flower here and take it away, the room is filled with its perfume. Is it possible for a human being to be here and go away and not leave its presence here? But, because we have trained ourselves to go only to the physical, to love the physical, to adore the physical, to worship the physical, to possess the physical, to enjoy the physical, we have reduced ourselves to the absolute crudest level of existence. Spirituality says, "Drop this, because however beautiful, however adorable, it began to die when it was born. You are only looking at dying things all around. What is it that you **can** love and adore? It is the indestructible Self within, *l'ame,* as you say. Try to look at that, try to find it, try to love it. That you can have eternally."

So, we have to feel the presence of things, and it is an unfortunate thing that often we don't feel the presence until it is absent. When the sun is there, we don't recognize it. Either it is too hot or too cold; we draw our curtains and remain in the darkness, though the sun is shining outside. When the sun sets, we put on our beautiful luminaries, brass, crystal, expensive, trying crazily to create a small sun in our home. The cosmic sun has gone, and we are left with a small human sun we create for ourselves. This we are doing in everything that we do.

The Master says, "Look at me, even I will go. I may be here for a hundred years, two hundred years, but there are two things you must remember, you may not be here all those years yourself. So, make sure that you make use of me while you are here, because I am eternal. My presence is there for you to feel, to experience, but only if you have trained yourself to perceive me in my reality, when I am in this body." Like we bring very expensive perfumes in bottles, the most expensive thing in this creation comes also in this human bottle. The bottle goes, the perfume remains. In fact, you keep it closed in the bottle; it is no use. It is like a lady who buys the most expensive perfume for five thousand dollars per one millilitre, you see, but never opens it because she is afraid the perfume will evaporate.

This is the second disease of humanity, and it is not new. Jesus Christ said long ago, two thousand years ago, "Don't hide your light under a bushel." We are still doing the same thing. We want to hide our qualities for love, our ability to be compassionate, our craving to be merciful. We want to be all these things. I don't think even the most stupid criminal doesn't have these qualities. That's why sometimes they murder a man, and then they are weeping there until the policeman comes, you see, for his real self. "What have I done?" "How did I do this?" He is weeping for himself.

So, when we bottle up this tenderness, and humanness, and kindness, and compassion, love, it is a waste of Nature's creation. Today this is all we produce, sealed bottles containing the most tender, most beautiful, most fragile, soft things, and we buy them and throw them away like that. We don't only throw away the bread that we buy, because in today's society, in this consumption-oriented society, we throw away ninety percent and use ten percent of everything that we buy. Unfortunately, we do this with human beings, too, even with the greatest saints that history has brought before us. Therefore, saints have been crucified, burnt at the stake, tortured.

It is like a child which breaks a perfume bottle to release the scent, not knowing what is inside, or a child which removes the wings of a fly to see how it will fly, killing the fly. This is symptomatic of our modern search for knowledge.

We are not able to learn anything without destroying that which we are trying to learn — 'vivisection', intuitively called, once upon a time. Even in our loves, we cut open the hearts of our beloved, trying to see if the heart really exists, not believing in the performance of the heart, but wanting to see the heart. It is like that old story of the man who cut open the goose that gave him a golden egg every morning. He wanted everything. He wanted everything at that moment, all the eggs it could lay in the future, and he had only a dead goose on his hands. That is why we have dead love affairs, dead lovers, because instead of allowing a bud to open by itself and flower itself, we are forcing open the petals and *voila*, I have a dead flower in my hands.

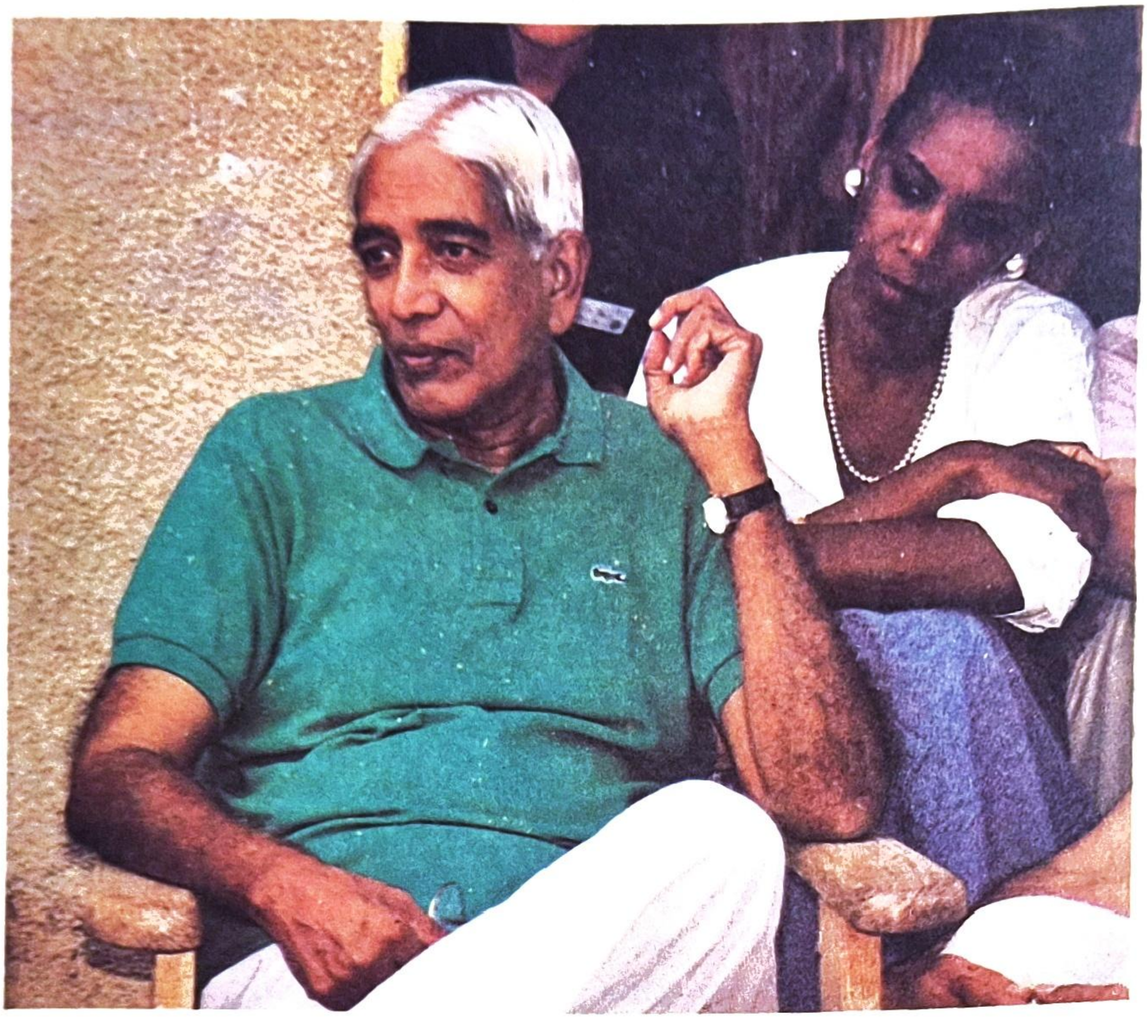
All this the Master teaches. I often wondered why he was quality-less. If he had been strong, strong people would have attacked him; it's natural. If he was rich, richer people would have tried to buy him. If he was beautiful, and of course he was beautiful, but in a different way, beautiful people would try to possess him. If he had been educated very highly, he would have been tempted with professorships in the Calcutta University and the University of Paris, etc. The great truth is that anything with a quality is exploited, not used. He wanted to be used, not exploited. Therefore, he came quality-less.

You see, we may drink wine when it is, 'ah', when we are happy, but then comes a thirst which can only be slaked by drinking water. Most of you would know the thirst that alcohol produces, and it is a fool who drinks more alcohol to satisfy the thirst that alcohol has already produced. This is the philosophy of indulgence: more of sex to fulfil the sex that you have already had; more of drugs to fulfil the drugs that you have already had. And landing up in a self-destructive cycle, repeating the old adage, that first the man drinks from the bottle, then the bottle drinks from the bottle, and finally the bottle drinks the man.

This is our usual life, you see. We fall into that which we are trying to exploit and enjoy. That is our slavery, and it is self-created slavery. It is foolish to say that somebody was tempted and became a slave of this, or this, or that. The Master says, "Look at me. I have no physical strength. Mostly I am a sick person. I have no money, but He gives what I need. I have no library, no education, yet I am here, and you have come to see me. Now try to see what it is that you have come to see."

This is the message of the Master: "Don't go away without seeing what is inside." When you have gone to see him and taken the trouble to go to him, at least remain as long as it takes to see what it is that drew you to him. He did not send out any calls. You came, in a very literal sense. Now, should we not have the patience to see him whom we have come to see? If you are able to do it, we can never leave his presence again. I pray that it may be so with all of you.

Thank you.



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MALAYSIA AND JAPAN

1 to 10 December, 1990

30

STRIKE A BALANCE

Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
1 December, 1990

Many people have asked why Western nations, the Occidental nations, are so prosperous, when according to the average Indian, the people there are not so very moral, etc. How can this be possible? We are bathing in the morning, we have been saying our prayers, going to Lakshmi temple on Friday, going around the *navagrahas* (nine planets) on Saturday, worshiping Shiva on Sunday, Bhagavad Gita on Monday, goes on like that. "Why we are like this and they are like that?" My Master had one answer. He said, "They have one God." That is, there is one channel, and our channels are many.

We have gods as if they are our servants. Lakshmi for wealth, Saraswati for knowledge, Hanuman for strength, Vishnu for protection, etc. It is as if we have a row of bell buttons in our room, and we have the cheek to press one of them and say, "Lakshmi, come and bestow wealth upon me. Saraswati, come and bless me with your knowledge." It is their religion, fraught at the same time with demands, backed by fear. One who makes demands would not normally be afraid, but here we are seeking out of fear. "Suppose I don't get it."

In the West there is only one, and my Master used to include Islam in that, you see, the prosperity of Islamic nations today. They, too, have one God. "He is One and none the second," says the Veda itself. *"Ekam, adwitiyam."* But in practice we don't have *"Ekam, adwitiyam."* We talk of *Paratatva* but we don't believe in it. We talk of the formless and the nameless and the quality- or attribute-less God, but we don't know where to look for Him.

It is a well-known axiom that, if at all you find anything, you only look and you will only find what you look for. You look for happiness, perhaps you find happiness. You don't find God in looking for happiness. Nor can we find God in looking for power and position. I mean, nobody expects to find God when you look for power and position; you expect to find power and position. And, by the way, to spare a ten-minute reluctant gap to go to your temple and offer a *thengai* [coconut] and a *pushpam* [flowers] there, and to pray that your duty to God is fulfilled.

We have no duty towards God. First, let this be clearly understood. God can do without our duties. He is not a boss who needs to be served. He is the Almighty, he is the Creator, he is the Destroyer, he is the Supporter of this universe. He needs nothing. He gives everything. So, I have no duty towards my gods. Then to whom have I a duty? To myself. I, who have strayed away from that original plenitude, beatitude, the divinity of my original existence, run away from the palace which is my birthright, the palace, the august majesty of my Father in Heaven, to use the Christian terminology. I have to go back. A runaway son must go back to his home. The home will not go to him. You don't carry your house in Klang all the way to Kuantan and say, "My son, your house has come to you." You bring the son home. Wherever you may be. You may be the sultan, with your palace on top of this *Shaan.* If your son runs away, you still have to go back to your palace. The palace doesn't go to you.

God is everywhere. God is somewhere. This is the truth of divine existence. Nothing can exist without Him but He can exist without anything. After all, He created it. He created the universe. He is the only thing which was not created. He is the *swayambu,* the self-born. So, in what way does he need our offerings and our prayers, our praises, our blasphemies, our flatteries? All our prayers are flatteries. "You are the highest, you are beyond everything, you are wise, you are great, you are the wielder of the days, you are the wielder of great bow and arrow, you are the destroyer of the bow." What is all this nonsense? *Tamasha.*

He doesn't have to be told what He is. In fact, he doesn't like it, I suppose. I mean, no father likes to be flattered by his son. "Father, father, you are the most wonderful father I ever had." "Yes, tell me what you want." Immediately, we come to the point and say, "Yes, what do you want, my son?" Then the mother says, "No, no, why do you talk like that? After all, he is only coming to praise you." "Yes, my dear, I know. He doesn't come to me unless he wants something from me." All the praise is only, you know, the muttering — that is the preliminary process.

Husbands feel the same thing when their wives are super-loving. "No, no darling. I made specially for you that which you like to eat." "Oh, what is the speciality of today? Is there a cinema you have to go to or is there a sari you wish to buy?" To be fair to the women, they are also suspicious of the men when they come with a bouquet of flowers. "So, what are you up to tonight?" Because the more you bring, the more you are going to ask, or the more you are seeking to hide. The biggest presents come from the most guilt-ridden hearts. This is the truth; it is not only a statement.

So you see, we have been trying to bribe God, flatter God, cheat God, and today you have the phenomenon of gods themselves being stolen from temples. How can you steal a God away from the temple? You can steal an idol. This is a very good thing, in my mind, because it shows you that temples can be robbed of idols, but not of divinity. Because we still worship; we don't bewail and sit at home and beat our breast and say, "Oh, my God has gone, my God has gone. What will I do tomorrow?" All these things are good. I think they are destined to happen, to show us errant human beings, with our rather gross ways of approaching the Divine, that all these are only forms in which He is there for the nonce. He is not **it**, though **it** cannot be without Him.

So you see, the whole idea of going away from temple worship is not a negation of religion by any means. It is a transcendence of religion. It is based on religion. If people have read the Bhagavad Gita, they would not talk and more of temple worship, because it is very clearly said there what we should do, how we have to go, stage by stage, how in the ultimate analysis we must be *bhaktas* of God, lovers of God, not seekers of God. When Arjuna asks Him, "Who is most beloved to you, or whom do you most love?", He says, "My *bhakta*." Not the *gyanis*, not the *karma* yogi, not the *tapasvi*, but he who loves Me in My love.

So you see, this is a sad fact that many people run away from spirituality, thinking that we are preaching something anti-religious or irreligious. On the contrary, the spiritual person is the religious person. The others are all ritualistic people; worshiping a God they have never known, driven to the temples out of the two instruments of fear and temptation. Fear of what they have done, seeking redemption, seeking pardon, seeking protection. Temptation for heaven, of which we know nothing, but which to us epitomizes a peace and a tranquillity which we don't find here; therefore we seek heaven. Who wants heaven for himself? Who knows what it contains?

It is like anything which a man seeks or a woman seeks. A promotion into a higher job — it looks very nice. The boss has a single room, he has two telephones on his table, padded cushion chairs, leather, but when you occupy that chair after years of aspiration and, I don't know, jockeying around for support and sympathy, it is again, as the Christians say, dust and ashes. You say, "Why? Is this what I sought? Is this what I wanted? All this responsibility! I cannot go home at five o'clock any more. I have to sit here till eight. I have to come in the morning at six, not at eight. I was a fool to aspire to this position." At the same time we put on a false front, and put on a new suit and a false grin on our face, and accept the congratulations of all. "Oh, congratulations on your promotion." Inside our hearts we weep.

So you see, when we seek something of which we know nothing, this is always the consequence. It is not sometimes the consequence. It is **always** the consequence. Seeking a God who we do not know, He is ridden with consequences of which we should be frightened. I am often amazed why people worship Shiva, knowing he is the god of destruction. In the cosmic hierarchy, he can do nothing but destroy, and when we seek him and his help, we can only seek destruction. Destruction of what? The evil tendencies in the way — my grossness. But we don't want those to go. We want to remain as we are, and Shiva to help us, because he is bound to do it, he is benevolent, he is all-merciful. *Shioham!*

So, we have not understood why we are praying. We have never known to whom we are praying. All these names of Krishna and Gopala and Vishnu and Shiva and Muruga — they are only names to us. They are pictures we have seen on the walls and the idols. If you ask somebody what the difference is between Muruga and Shiva, he can only say, "I don't know, but I have been worshiping Shiva because my grandfather worshiped Shiva," or, "... Muruga because my grandfather worshiped Muruga."

Today we have the modern craze of going to the Sabarimalai life, there would be more of these crazes which cinema people have fuelled. Because after that famous picture on Ayyappan, this craze multiplied manifold. Ordinarily, it was restricted to small segments of Kerala. Then it spread like a cancer, as Mr. Durai rightly put it. Now, cancer is not a danger in itself, as the one who has done some physiology knows, it is only a multiplication of cells. Those cells seek their own growth, their own multiplication, without any thought of the overall health of the organism. Therefore, the organism dies, the cancerous cells thrive. Similarly, when we seek our own welfare in a society, without thinking of the total welfare of that society, and if, God forbid, we prosper, we have cancer cells multiplying.

I am visiting Malaysia after nearly ten years. On one side, I am very happy to see the material growth here, the cleanliness, the beautiful roads, the well-stocked shops, even Toys-R-Us. On the other side, I am appalled at the ignorance of these people who are copying American civilization. Nothing is got without sacrifice. We are paying a price for all this material development. Of course, you will say, "You're an Indian from a dirty filthy country, you see, where you have poor roads, bad cars, useless factories producing useless stuff." We have to wait and see which survives. Today it is the material civilizations which are under attack. Why? Because they have something to give, something which we want. If we cannot get it rightly we want it wrongly. Isn't it? Why are we robbed? Because we have more than another man. He has nothing, I have everything. He says, "Take it!" How does it belong to him? You have no right to hold something which you cannot keep.

So you see, social laws are nothing but the manifestations of the interplay, which is greed on one side and want on the other side. It is too easy to condemn one and extol the other. That we are materially happy does not in any way prove that we are even minimally mentally happy.

I travel a lot, I travel in all societies. I have seen people in the best-developed countries of the West, and there I find the greatest unhappiness, the greatest misery, the largest number of suicides, mental cases, asylums. We don't think of one, you see; we only think of the other. We don't see that when there is light, there must be darkness with it. Where there is prosperity, there must be poverty. Where there is health, there is inevitable sickness. Where a coin has a head, it must have a tail on the other side. Where there is good, there is bad hidden in it. They are two poles, like the positive and the negative poles of electricity, or the positive and the negative poles of a magnet, or the North and South Poles of your own globe. Without the two, the material world cannot exist. Therefore, which should we prefer? Nobody should prefer either pole, because whether you are at the North Pole or the South Pole, you are being frozen to death. It is in between somewhere that you are able to be happy in a certain sense.

So, philosophy says, take the in-between course. Neither this extreme nor that extreme. Don't give up religion for material life; don't give up material life for religion. Strike a balance. This is a most important teaching of my Master, the Sahaj Marg system, that if the *rishis* of the past committed the greatest blunder on earth, it was by running away from civilization, locking themselves up in their small huts in their jungles, meditating and doing nothing else, no thought for society except their own self-evolution, becoming *brahma-rishis*, *rajarishis*, what have you, contributing nothing except books. He who does not contribute anything, however wise he may be, has not added an iota of knowledge or wisdom or health or happiness to this universe. We must garner to distribute. We must be educated so that we can teach. We must become wealthy so that we can distribute our wealth.

It is like the human system: whatever you may eat, the body retains only what it needs and the extra is thrown out as excreta. If you say, "No, no, all this beautiful mango and *badaam halwa* and this, whatever I am eating, you see, dosa and chutney. How can I throw it out into the latrine?" Well, you will be dead in two or three days. The whole process of existence starts with the amoeba, taking in at one end and throwing it out at the other, retaining what it must. When you retain more than you can hold, it is a disease. We are not against wealth *per se*, because wealth is like an accumulator, a battery where energy has been deposited, but that energy must be used. You know, if you buy a couple of dry cells and keep it in your drawer for a year, it is gone, it dissipates. It does neither good to you, nor has it done good to anybody else. Knowledge held only in my head: "No, no, sir, I am not willing to give knowledge. It is secret, it is sacred." It goes. It goes with you into your grave, particular individual grave, or your funeral pyre, and is lost.

So, nature does not tolerate one thing: that is, retaining what you have got. Take as much as you have the capacity to take. The more you can take, the more nature gives you, so long as the flow is maintained. Like a river — if it can ultimately reach its waters to the sea, that river can take more and more water. There is no danger in it. But if you are damming it up somewhere, because you are carelessly inconsiderate of other people's needs — disaster. Water is impounded beyond the capacity of the dam to hold — the whole thing breaks and floods everything. That it does not happen within the lifetime of one individual is not a proof that this theory is infallible, and always working.

In Tamil we have a saying that thirty years of prosperity or thirty years of misery seems to be the limit, then things change inevitably. Things **must** change, because if the day does not reach its peak at noon and does not fade off into dusk and the sun sets and night comes, you have no rest, however much we may be afraid of the darkness and go around with flashlights in our pockets, looking under carpets in our drawing rooms for snakes which don't exist. The night is necessary, because it is the time when nature rests, when you rest, when you recuperate yourself, recharge your batteries, as it were, and with the sunrise you must be up yourself, fresh for the day's work.

So, there are always pauses, you know, which we call pause. Even planes have to make technical landings somewhere. Now, if you are afraid of the night and want only the day, only children can afford that sort of wish.

So we must have a taste for life, and say, "Well, whatever God brings me, I accept, because He gives nothing which is not good for me." The saints of the past were not fools to welcome poverty and sickness for themselves, because by this one person being sick, millions and millions of people were, shall we say, redeemed from their personal dharmas. That saints exist is a proof of Nature's mercy, God's mercy. But is it right that only one man should participate in this glorious adventure of taking upon himself all the pain, misery of this world? Is it right? We are extolling Christ and Buddha and all these great personalities. Oh, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ — even today you are celebrating it. But who weeps out of shame, that here was one man who was made to bear the pain, not only for them, but for now and for eternity, as it is still believed. For all time to come, he has taken away our pain. Don't you think our thinking is tainted, our desires are tainted, when we permit a man to suffer to this extent and we want to enjoy life?

So you see, there is something very wrong with the human fraternity. Instead of every one of us saying, "Come, let us share this burden. Let there be no single saints; let us all have a saintly share of this burden. The good and the bad, both come together." If he suffered on the cross and was crucified and was killed by the Romans, he also achieved the spiritual goal. Often it is said that without that, we cannot achieve, but this we question in Sahaj Marg. Suffering becomes not necessary, because such saints took upon themselves the suffering of others. To us it comes necessarily, inevitably, because of our samskaras.

So, we have to do the cleaning process very thoroughly, remove the samskaras of the past, so that the burdens of the past are removed. For this no God can help. I must do it myself. See, if a man is going to bathe only when it rains and say, "This is the shower that God bestows upon me for my cleanliness," he'll probably bathe only a few times of the year. We have to bathe daily. We have to approach God and say, "God, make me into what you want me to become. You, if it is possible. Don't tempt me with your gifts; don't frighten me with our gifts of the negative nature, disease, pestilence."

What are temptation and fear for? They are for children. "If you study well, I will give you a bicycle. If you fail, no holiday." We have been brought up in a culture where fear and temptation are being used right from the cradle, and we are succumbing to that as we grow older, and becoming more and more, shall we say, tempt-able and frighten-able. I see this process going on inexorably. As a man becomes older, he is more and more frightened. Instead of becoming bolder and bolder from childhood, wiser and wiser, we are becoming more and more criminally stupid, more and more fear-ridden, so that at the end we are almost quaking with fear. "What is going to happen to me?" Why not? Where is that Yama who is going to take you away if you have done what you should do, and saw the God you should seek — that is, the ultimate God.

You are all aware of this story of that young fellow Markandeya. Yama could not do anything to him. What could Yama do to Markandeya? Shiva comes and says, "Stop! He is my devotee." That is the proof that it can be for every one of us. Markandeya was not one Markandeya. This world can produce every child as a Markandeya, but we don't want it. From the beginning, you know, for the women, for the girl child, it is marriage, fulfilment in one sphere. For the boys it is fulfilment in career, and fuelling their ambitions beyond all possibilities. "You must be like this." First starts this stupidity: "You must be like Papa, whatever he may be," and the child falls into this trap. "I want to be like my father," – puts on the father's shoes, puts on the father's shirt, and struts around, and then we photograph him, hug him, kiss him. Even the father doesn't stop to think, "What is this child aspiring to be? Like me?" Which father has thought like that? It is a shame on society, you see, that fathers don't even think before they photograph their children and hug them and kiss them. They should say, "Stop, my son. Not this for you. Look for something better." But we are happy, we are proud. "Look at my son. Govinda is growing up, Krishna is growing up, Bala is growing up. He wants to be like his father," and all this merrymaking, cakes and ice cream.

So you see, the father has a tremendous responsibility. The father is the first guru. *"Matru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava,"* says the Vedas. *Acharya* [teacher] comes third. This is not that mothers are more important, by the way, because many have been misinterpreting this famous statement of the Veda. *"Matru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava, acharya devo bhava."* It is not in order of importance that number one is the most important. It is that the mother is like the guru for the beginning stages of life, up to say the age of seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. The father takes over subsequently; he becomes the guru when it comes to discipline, when it comes to guide the developing mind of the child, its aspirations. Then comes the Guru — after your marriage, because according to Hinduism, you don't qualify for *kailasa* until you are married — then takes over the Guru. And who is the *athiti* [guest] who is the deva? Not your guests. Invited people can never be athiti. Athiti means one who has come out of time, unexpectedly — a-thiti. We invite, you know, print invitations saying, "They are my athitis." God help us.

The athiti is like the pig which blundered into the camp of the rishis, who had invited Krishna for dinner, and Krishna goes to don the form of a pig, a jungle boar, and blundered into the tent and was beaten for his crime of changing his form. But unfortunately he was the Almighty and this beating fell on everybody's back. But by then the boar had run away and they said, "Oh, the Almighty himself comes." The great rishis were no exceptions. With all their knowledge, with all their *tapasya*, they were as stupid as the modern materialist-ridden human being of today. They could not recognize God when He came.

So you see, we had no training in the last several thousands of years, if the Vedas are to be believed, if the Upanishads are to be believed, if the Puranas are to be believed. At least in India, the human being has remained stagnant materially, spiritually, more tragically. Then he could not recognize God; today he still does not know where God is. We talk of the *Dashavataras* — Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana — all these. We know that God has come in these forms, yet when He comes in this form we say, "Chi! A pig — dirty, unclean. We chase it out. Trash the fellow."

So you see, there has been no awakening of this vast unexplored lore which the human mind in India has bestowed upon us. The ignorance, this crass ignorance, this stupid ignorance, this fearful ignorance has come from the Vedic times. The ritualistic path of the Veda is full of such nonsense. Scholars and *jnanis* bewail the existence of the mantras of the Rig Veda, the earlier part of it, which is the *Karma Kanda* — rituals for everything on earth, including the famous puja which Lord Nara is supposed to have done. Crass, stupid ignorance, self-seeking ignorance, self-blinding ignorance, all based on lust and avarice. The *Jnana Kanda* is completely forgotten. Who knows about it — the Upanishads? How many people who worship in temples, even priests, know how many Upanishads there are?

According to the Hindu scene, the Hindu belief, the *sanatana dharma* is on three pillars. It is called *prasthanathraya* — the *Brahma Sutra*, the Upanishads, and the Gita. Nobody knows about them. Nobody knows the *Brahma Sutra*. Perhaps by name, yes. Upanishads, we know more about them here because some Westerners took the trouble to study them. Max Muller, and we have Max Muller *Bhavans* where we learn Sanskrit but not the Upanishads. The Gita is the most popular, the most famous, but nobody knows it. What did it say? It says again and again, "I am in all forms. I am at the heart of every created thing. Don't seek me outside. Seek me within. I am in the heart of every created thing. Seek me there."

When Arjuna asks, "Which is the best way?", He says, "Follow the way of raja yoga," because the mind is the thing which troubles us. As my Master used to say, "The mind is our liberator, the mind is our destroyer," depending on which way your mind goes. He said, "We are now servants of our mind. We must become masters of our mind." A master is nothing but one who has mastered his mind itself. To imagine that he can immediately do miracles, or delay a plane for his own pleasure for two hours, or advance its time because he wishes to leave early, this is again our ignorance.

We have been trained on such nonsense because we want this nonsense to satisfy our existence into a lulled state of torpor. "God is good, God is kind, God is merciful, so let us not worry about it." He will forgive. Like that, you see. My Master said that if you go to him as penitents, weeping and beating your breast, he may turn away his face in shame. Is this my son who comes grovelling to me instead of standing up erect with his head properly held and saying, "Father, here I am." As children, we go out and play in the muck, we go out and play in the dust, we tear our clothes, we come back filthy, and our mother only hugs us and kisses us and washes us and changes our dress. In front of our gods we believe that we have to be ashamed; we must go to get clean. Therefore a ritual bath. We must go to get perfumed. There is no *chandanan* [sandal paste]. But inside? What is it there inside?

So, spirituality focuses on the need of a clean inner state — no filth, no muck, no guilt. Guilt is the greatest crime. My Master always said the more you feel guilty about something you have done, the deeper that guilt is plunged into yourself, and it hardens and hardens and hardens until it becomes a cancer. Some of you at least may have read that famous story, *Crime and Punishment*. How much guilt troubles him. Why should we feel guilty? True repentance lies not in feeling guilty and seeking pardon, but in making a resolution to yourself that, "I shall not repeat this mistake again."

Sahaj Marg's greatest virtue is that it recognizes neither virtue nor vice, neither sin nor whatever is its opposite, neither good nor bad, because anything which keeps us here is holding us back. If you are a Sikh and you have a chest full of gold, and another man has only a chest full of geological specimens of equal weight, your gold is not going to help you there, because both will sink with the weight of what you are carrying, not with the quality of what you are carrying.

If you are up in a balloon and you have to throw down to survive, you have to throw down everything. If you are swimming and you are in a suit, you have to take off your coat and your pants. You cannot say, "I paid seven hundred dollars for the suit!" Life or seven hundred dollars is the equation. Weight is weight, whether it is of gold or of feathers. We all know these experiments that the scientists of the West did. Volume may differ, not weight. One kilo is one kilo. We can sink with two kilos of gold chain around my neck; it's better to throw out that gold chain. We do it!

At the fag end of our lives, we are in a mood of renunciation, as we call it. It is not renunciation. It is the desperate struggle of the drowning man, throwing off things in a desperate endeavour to remain afloat. It is not surrender. It is not renunciation. It is cheating yourself. "No, no, sir. I have given up all my wealth." To whom? To the temple. Why to the temple and not to the hospital? "No, no, after all, you know, we look to Him, so I thought let it fulfil a divine purpose." What is the divine purpose? "My redemption." Are you redeemable, or deserving of redemption? "I hope he will think so because I have bestowed my wealth upon him." You have bestowed your wealth upon him, you stupid beggar, with your two and a half millions and your seven millions. You call yourself wealthy before God who is the creator of all the wealth in this universe? This is our tradition. And this we expect God to be proud of, to recognize, and to confer His blessings on us. *"Tathastu."*

So you see, it is necessary to transcend this religion. It is not religion's fault, because religion, as Mr. Durai pointed out, is the kindergarten school of our spiritual progress. There we learn something — ethics, basic morality. Then what? No good man qualifies for heaven, because man is supposed to be good. That you are good doesn't qualify you in any special way. That you are bad, of course, may condemn you to something. "But I am a good man." Well, you are expected to be a good man. When your son says, "I have studied well, Papa," you say, "Yes, my son, that's what I expect of you. I didn't breed a fool!" So, what is it that you are proud of in being a good man who has been doing some petty dharma, and not violating the sanctimonious rules of a foolish society? What is the good that you have done?

We have to do something beyond that, to give up the idea of good and bad itself. *"Sukha dukhe same kritva."* Make them equal, and then transcend them, because where one is, the other has to be. In this world of dualities, Krishna says, "Do not look for peace. It does not exist here." One, because it is a false interplay of two forces, and at one moment one is prevalent and at another moment another is prevalent. At one moment there is a wave of sickness, then there is a wave of health. You don't have balanced sickness and health. "No, let me have a little sickness and a little health, God." No. You can choose to transcend both together, which means a body-less eternal existence, which means an acceptance of death as something inevitable, something which you must learn to accept as a, what shall I say, freedom from this bondage, that I cannot go out of here with this body. Whatever the Puranas may say of one person who went to *swarga* [heaven] with his body, it is a lie. It cannot happen.

So, one who wants liberation has to leave his body. That means you must be ready to leave your body. More, you must be willing to leave it **now**, if necessary. It's like you are waiting in an airport, Frankfurt, let us say. Your flight has been missed and you are crazy in front of a counter, "Put me on any flight; it doesn't matter which," and they oblige. They say, "Well, you know, I have to re-route you." "Yes, for heaven's sake, put me on some flight. I don't want to catch the next flight tomorrow morning at the same time. Put me on any flight." Are you willing to take **any** flight out of here **now** to that eternity which is our goal? This is a test of your seeking, of your integrity, of your aspiration. Those who can answer 'Yes' are welcome to try it.

Thank you.

(Talk given at open house.)

31

IN THE MASTER'S HEART

Klang, Malaysia
1 December, 1990

The Guide and the guided: two entities, far away. Somehow they manage to come together. The first contact itself is a tangential connection. Then slowly, you know, little by little, until they are one — this is merger. Now what merges with what, of course, spiritually there is a difference. If you are just going to remain in tangential contact, it is no use. "Oh yes, I am in contact." Yes, but to what benefit? Even gears have to mesh before they can move. The idea is to go in, you see. Now, there is some modicum of a common field or area of existence. That has to be widened by the laws of individualism. One thing Mr. Durai I think deliberately avoided, is that after the clay is moulded in its wet state it has to be fired, otherwise it would not retain the form. Of course, not in a physical sense of putting in the oven to bake. If you go back to the Sanskrit word '*tapasya*', that comes from the word '*tapa*', which means heat. A certain amount of baking is necessary.

Kabir has given a beautiful *doha* (couplet). You know, those old big pots they used to take for grain — they take it wet, mould it like rope, and lay it layer by layer, and then with one hand inside with a wooden mallet, keep pounding. Kabir uses this image to say, similarly the Divine or the Master, or whatever you want to call it, enters into you and bears the shocks from outside. The clay is being formed with minimum of shock on itself. The rest the hand bears. Naturally, if the potter smashed it and the clay went in, then there is a hole in it.

In Sahaj Marg this is very true. I asked Babuji, "You can clean everything. Why don't you clean us totally so there is no more pain?" He said, "You know, certain amount of pain or *bhoga* is essential to learn our lessons from it." Like a child going towards the fire — every time you pull him back, but once you allow him to touch it, he will not go there again. It looks a cruel way, but it is not cruel really, it is an effective way.

The human being is the stupidest thing in creation. Each one wants to learn by personal experience. "No, no, don't drink." "I am not like that," I say. "He is off with one bottle of beer but I can stand a bottle of whisky." This sort of nonsense. "The fire burns but it wont burn me. I am more careful." Careful with what? How can you be careful with fire?

So, when we insist on learning by our own experience, we are committed to our experience, such as it might be. Then you have no business to go wailing and weeping to your Master or God and say, "Save me!", because it is your choice. "I wish to experience," like in the West many people are experiencing and experimenting in so many ways and they are suffering a lot. "No, he got AIDS but it doesn't mean I will get AIDS." This is like Paramaputra in his famous *Dakshaprasani* — the last question, I believe, was, "What is the greatest mystery in life?", and Paramaputra answers that we see everybody dying all around us but we think we will never die. So, this craziness.

Human beings have only one real asset: we have the ability to transmit knowledge. What we have, others should learn — from the experience from the past and the knowledge from the past. But we want the experience. Herein lies the weakness. If we could accept other people's experiences to be good for us instead of blindly imagining, "I am different and my experience is different," ninety-nine percent of the human suffering would be off, and the other one percent in bhoga of past samskaras we would accept gladly.

So, it is true what Babuji said: "All your suffering is self-created." Of course, much of it is seeking pleasure, and the other side of the coin is pain. You cannot have the two independent of each other. Where one is the other is also, like twin sisters. He who seeks pleasure will find pain, and I suppose he who seeks pain will find some pleasure. That is perhaps what spirituality is all about. That is why in the long run, in the final analysis, the saints end up being blissful people, whereas we are only sometimes happy, sometimes ignorant, sometimes ecstatic, but never in bliss.

Go for pain; you'll find bliss. Go for pleasure, and you are going for the nethermost of hell. So, it is all self-created. And what is self-created we have to destroy. Destroying what is my creation is what co-operation is about. I don't have to co-operate in any other way to help people. If I have fallen into a well and somebody lets a rope down to pull me up, my co-operation is only on holding to the rope, because every time I let go in my fit of exuberant independence, I am going to fall again. The higher I go and let go, the more the danger I am going to break my leg and head.

So, in Sahaj Marg we progressively lose our individual right to independence. In every other system in the world, including religion, including hatha yoga, or all other yogas, you are progressively liberated for the time. After a certain number of years the guru says, "Now, my son, you are fit. You are free, go ahead." Disciples preach like that. Christ's disciples preach like that, but in Sahaj Marg, no.

Here, the need for the Master increases as we go on. Ultimately, it is a total dependence, total merger, and total oneness. I am lost, I am nowhere now, and I don't exist. People are afraid of Sahaj Marg precisely for this reason. "No, no, I will be lost." Are you found now? You are still lost. At least we will be found there. Where? In the Master's heart. You want to find money in your pocket, not somewhere on the streets.

So, when you are in the Master's heart, you are not lost. Only thing is, you have no outside, separate, individual physical existence anymore. But if somebody says, "Where is this guy?", he is in the Master's heart. This is what Hanuman has shown, in a crude way in Hinduism, as cutting his heart open and Rama is there. But here it is different. Here, the Master must be willing to show you his heart and you see his devotee. "What is the use of Rama being in my heart? I must be in His heart," as Dr. Varadachari asked many times. People said, "Sir, I am always thinking of Babuji Maharaj." Yes, but does he ever think of you? As Babuji said, "Knock on the door of the Master's heart in such a manner that he will open it to see who is there. After that, your job is over."

(informal talk given in Klang, Malaysia)

32

IT IS LOVE THAT BRINGS US

Seremban, Malaysia
2 December, 1990

With reference to a particular abhyasi, I say it has been a great love affair between Babuji and the abhyasi. So, it shows love affairs are quite common. But you must remember, the love affair is with the Master, and there also not at the human level. Krishna had sixteen wives. It is not that he could have had sixteen wives physically, but they were soul mates in the spiritual sense. In that sense, to every abhyasi male or female, according to Hindu philosophy, God alone is *purusha*, and others are females. This difference of the physical sense is only for propagation of species. It has no meaning as far as the souls are concerned. All *atmas* (souls) are females as far as the Lord is concerned.

So, it has to be a love affair. If it is not a love affair, then it is only a transaction. I am here for something. He gives me, I give you. This is what I need. You go to Sai Baba to get something. Today I heard someone saying, "So and so is a devotee of Sai Baba." Sai Baba himself has denied categorically about this. He said, "I am not a guru in that sense." Some of our people went to Sai Baba, disillusioned with Sahaj Marg, who are not perhaps so happy about Sahaj Marg. Sai Baba said, "I am not a guru. Don't come to me. If you want a guru, go to that guy in Shahjahanpur. He is a guru. He can take souls across this *sansarasagara*. I only perform miracles." He himself has said this.

So you see, there are *acharyas*, there are *sankaracharyas* who are *janathipathis*. They have nothing to do with *shishyas* (disciples). They have no disciples. Sankaracharya has absolutely denied this specifically. He said, "I have no disciples. If they claim they are my disciples, that is their problem." He only initiates into *sanyasa* a handful of people. They are his shishyas. It is a *sanyasa marga*.

So, we have to be very clear of what we are doing. "Oh, I am devotee of Sai Baba." How can you be devoted to him when he does not accept you? Otherwise, it is like a stray dog coming here and wagging its tail at my gate and claiming it belongs to this house. It may come day after day after day, and you may give it a bit of bread, but it is no more your dog and you are no more its master.

So you see, this idea of spiritual association with the Master is very much a matter of love between them. I have often clarified that in Sahaj Marg we start by regulating the mind, so that it can become a perfect instrument which, through meditation, will acquire the ability to concentrate. Concentration is an instrument of revelation. It is useful to reveal to us what we have to do, what we have to be, etc. It cannot give us the divine experience. If you look at it in that way, the whole idea of raja yoga is nonsense. Meditation and concentration by themselves cannot give you an iota of divine experience. Therefore we have the cleaning, the purification of the self. Which, as Mr. Durai said yesterday, to our knowledge does not exist in any other system, though in religion you have ritualistic cleaning. All this nonsense, you know — washing the face with water, or rubbing the hands with sand. This is all ritual. There is no **inner** cleaning. You may stand under the shower for three days, but the inner self is the same as it was before. That purifies the heart so that it may receive the divine essence.

There are two distinct aspects: meditation and cleaning. Neither affects the other in the real sense; that is for one purpose, this is for another purpose. How to attract more and more of this essence of the Divine? Why should He bother about me? We have the practice of constant remembrance, because Babuji says that which we love, we remember. Here, you have to love by remembering first. By constantly remembering Him, love is created.

So you see, there are three *angas* to Sahaj Marg. One: perfection of the mind as an instrument over which I am now the master. It will do what I bid it to do. If I say, "Look and tell me," it will tell me. Now, if the mind says, "Go after the ice cream," I go after the ice cream, "Go to the tennis court," I go to the tennis court. "Wink at the girl across the net," I wink at the girl across the net. These are not jokes. These are also realities. So you see, the mind is now my master. I have to become its master. That is of the *trishulam*, let us say it is the first *shulam*.

The second shulam is the cleaning, which purifies me as a receptacle for the divine grace to come in.

The third is constant remembrance, without which nothing is possible because there I am absolutely remembering Him. Through that remembrance I create love. When love has been established there is no more need to remember as an activity, because I must remember Him whom I love. So, remembrance brings about love, and now the love makes me remember Him all the time. Now because of my love, He is attracted towards me. Then He says, "Let me see what this lover of mine wants."

So you see, these are three aspects. They are three distinct aspects connected in our system, because the Master, in his wisdom in his genius, in his spiritual, shall we say, absoluteness created these three things. So, one without the other is no use. Some people tell me, "I do cleaning, but I don't meditate." They are clean, but where is the mind? Therefore, the mind is not perfect. You have not the mastery over the mind. Therefore, you continue to be wayward, a slave of your tendencies, a slave of your fears, a slave of your superstitions. No use.

"I meditate, but don't do the cleaning." Well, you may have a perfect mind, but you are a soiled vehicle into which nothing can descend. "I do both but no constant remembrance." Well, you will get something, but not that for which you are seeking.

There are love affairs and love affairs, and most of them don't end in marriage. So, what do you get out of such a love affair? The English very stupidly say that it is better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all. It is crass ignorance, nonsensical. He who loves and has not got his beloved, has failed.

Here we are not set out for failure. May their wedding [of a couple just married] be blessed because, you know, this is another important point: had they stuck to their religions they could never have married. It is an absolute proof that religion divides. One Christian and one Hindu — both ignorant, both not knowing what their religions say. But both stupid, superstitious, and what should I say, afraid. She, afraid that if she doesn't go to church, she will be excommunicated by the pope sitting some ten thousand miles away. And he, stupidly ignoring and thinking Yama will come if he does not do his practices. Love, fortunately for them, strong enough to overcome on both sides of the fence, or both sides of the tennis net, the superstitions and the fear and the ignorance.

This is proof that what religion divides, love unites. And in spirituality, love is the thing. It is love which brings us. You see how often people talk, people of various nationalities, races, and colours are assembled here, and they miss the significance. **How** are we here together? How are we here: Chinese, Malays, Hindus, Christians, Germans, Indians, Timbuctuans, I don't know. What brings us together, and more importantly, what keeps us together? There must be something, and we don't talk about it. If it is a dinner, it is the food that brings us together. If it is a church, it is religion which is bringing us together. If it is a cinema, it is a movie which is bringing us together. What is it that brings us together here, where there is no temptation, no fear of anything? Must be something, you see! It is the love of one whom we all love. Like children come back home because their mother is at home. Otherwise, they would be going each in one direction.

So you see, we must remember this very important fact, that multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-religious group as we are, this coherence, this ability to adhere together, work towards a common goal, is precisely because we, each one of us, is having that love affair with him who is our Master, who is our Beloved, who is our Goal. When you speak, please speak explicitly of this ability to be together, though from disparate backgrounds. There must be some magic which keeps us all together. And the true magic of life is love. Not the perfume that you use, not the magic of the moon and the mood, as they say in India.

The magic of love makes hearts come together without consideration of body's colours, religions. This we must always remember, this we must always emphasize, this we must always try to keep alive. It is like a rope made up of so many individual strands of thread. They are going looped up, and it cannot be broken.

I have often said Master is the agent of change. Very true. I also believe he is a knitter of a web, the weaver of a web. Intangible almost, almost which you cannot see, like a spider web, unless it is in the early part of the morning when it is with a little background of the sun, with a little dew on it. Then you see the web. Otherwise, often webs cannot be seen. His web is so fine that nobody can see it. What does he weave it from? Hearts. How many hearts will he use in this web? Infinite! When will he complete it? Never! Because it is an infinite job. It is going on all the time. The web is becoming bigger and bigger, until it is one massive universal web. What will it catch? More hearts. For what purpose? To become more strands in this web. With what purpose? To catch more hearts.

So, in a sense, just as they said Peter was a fisher of men, my Master is a fisher for hearts. We fish for hearts. This is a fishy business, but a **hearty** fishing business. Not a stinking fishy business, but a hearty fishing business. Here we have no secrets to hide, precisely because it is the only legitimate love affair. It is an ennobling love affair. It is a love affair which will lead to a revolution, to your freedom from fear, superstition, ignorance. And it will always keep you with the one whom you love.

In worldly love, affairs are often broken, often don't result in marriage, often end in divorce, God forbid, broken hearts. Here, there is no question of a broken heart, because my heart must ultimately merge with His heart. There are no two hearts; there is only one heart. And His heart can never break.

This is the role of Sahaj Marg and I wish you all the joy of it. May your love grow, may your affair flourish, and may it lead to the ultimate union of the lover and the Beloved.

Thank you!

33

WHAT IS A MASTER?

Kuantan, Malaysia
3 December, 1990

First of all, I would like to explain what a Master is or should be. Basically, a Master is one who has achieved mastery over himself. I have to point this out because very often people do not like this term. When they say "master and slave," you know this sort of idea exists between the master and the slave. "He is the master; I am the servant." But in our system when we address the Master as Master, we only say in effect, "O you, who have mastered yourself." Self-mastery is mastery. It doesn't mean the Master is master over any number of people or over a territory, or anything else. Here, there is nothing to be afraid of, because we have always been afraid of superior persons.

We are afraid of masters — I mean master/slave type — we are afraid of bosses in our work place, we are afraid even of our gods, I was about to say, but God Himself.

So, religion, according to my Guruji (I would rather use the word 'Guruji' from now on), has depended upon the two instruments of fear and temptation. This is not at all possible of being denied, because we have the temptation of heaven or redemption, and the fear of hell or punishment. When we react to them, we are only being terrified out of our wits, into a fear of hell — *narakam* as we say in Tamil, *naraka* in Sanskrit — or we are hoping and longing for some sort of heaven which, to our as yet untamed imagination, is nothing but a place full of peace, without any problems, without any work: in short, a place of enjoyment.

Now my Master was, of course, one of the very greatest realised persons in the history of India. I personally believe that he was the greatest. This is not a matter of emotion or *guru bhakti*. The guru bhakti that we normally know is a fraud, a hypocrisy. I question the so-called guru bhakti of most *bhaktas* and gurus. We only touch their feet and bow before them because we are going with a servile attitude to them, seeking some benefit. We go as beggars. My Master, my guru said, "Whenever we pray or we bow like this, expecting something in return, we are worse than beggars." Why worse than beggars? Because if a guru is worth his salt, surely he knows why we have come. Is it necessary to remind him? "God, I am hungry. Give me food. I have three children. They are going starving. Please give them something."

On one side, we say God is the all-knower. He is everywhere. He is at all times — past, present, and future. He is the Master of the universe. He is the Creator, the Destroyer, the Preserver. He cannot be something which we can say. It must also follow that, since He is the God of destruction and the God of creation, and the God of protection, these are His functions. He creates, He preserves what He creates, and when the time comes, He removes.

Every agriculturist knows this truth. We sow our fields with seeds, we nurture them, water them, fertilize them, and, when the time comes, we cut the grain, take the seed home, thresh it, put the grain on one side and burn the rest or put it back as manure. This is the eternal cycle. To the grain, it may look as if it is being destroyed. It is as if a child grows up and they say, "Oh, what a wonderful child we have lost! Now we have this stupid adult before me."

So, when we grow, we lose our childhood. We have to grow out of — we have not lost anything. We grow out of a past state into our present state, and we must grow out of our present state into our future state. That which does not grow out of an existing state into the next higher state, is there going round and round, which is called *punarjanmam* (rebirth). It is not a punishment.

It is like a boy in school who cannot pass one class and he is detained there, because one who obviously cannot master his own class is not going to be able to master the next higher class. What is the idea of classes in school? It is to progressively educate you, give you, progressively, growing mastery over the subjects that you have studied, and as you master them, you go higher and higher in the echelons of knowledge.

The same thing in service: the higher you go, the more you have to be capable of — not just in doing, but in understanding, in getting done.

So, you see, it is growth that you must think of. And like water in the river, which stagnates on the sides, and it goes round and round. The dead leaves are falling and they go merrily round and round. Can you say that river is having punarjanma? The middle path is going merrily through, the two sides are stagnating, precisely because they are in contact with the solid bank of the river, its frictional effect stops this, the middle is going faster, then progressively slower and slower, at the bank perhaps zero velocity.

So, anything that is in touch with a static system, must also slow down because of that, shall we say, *sparsha* (contact) of the static system. If I am moving **in** a bus, I am moving **with** the bus. When I try to get down and put my foot down on the ground, this static world immediately catches hold of me, and if I am not at the right speed, I will fall back and break my head.

So, one who wants to move must make sure he is in a living, moving system — not in some static system. This is the logic of either being wedded to a static system and being ourselves static, or being attached to a growing system and growing with it, moving with it, and, of course, it becomes an adventure.

In a static system, we have the advantage of security, what we think is security. We know everything. We know what is expected of us. We feel safe. In a moving, growing, evolving system, the future is always unknown. I mean, it cannot be known, because if it is known, you are already there. There is a difference between sitting in Kuantan and thinking of London, and actually **going** to London. Anybody can sit here in an easy chair, think that he is in London, look at the Tower Bridge, etc. It is safe, it is secure, and it is purely imagination. But the moment you buy a ticket and set out with Malaysian Airlines, or any other airline, then starts what you call problems, but what some might say is an adventure. You must get the right seat, you must get a confirmed reservation, you must not miss your connection at wherever you have to change, and when you come to London things must be favourable. What will I do? Where will I go? That is why we telephone friends, telegraph friends frantically and ensure that somebody will meet me at London Airport, because again that security consciousness comes. "Here is someone I know. Here is someone I trust. He will take me." If you can have somebody with you on the flight itself, so much the better.

So you see, we are always seeking companions. But here there is also the wisdom that if you are **moving**, seek a companion who will **move** with you. There is no use in a man who will you bid you goodbye at Subang International. Until he bids you goodbye or, like the French people, you kiss each other, well, but the moment he leaves at the immigration point, you will feel lost.

Now, who is it that can go with you from here to eternity? In Tamil we have a saying that your wife will come with you up to the door. I mean, when you are dead, your son will come to the burning *ghat* (crematorium), who thereafter? *Dharmam thalai kakkum*. (Righteousness will save the head.) But it is not enough. What is this dharma? Who is Dharma?

I am always tempted to refer to a famous story. We are always hearing Puranas. People are coming and preaching the Puranas, talking of Bhagavatham, Mahabharatham, and Ramayanam — ad nauseam. But I do not know how many of you have known the significance. When Karna was dying, he had been shot down; he was lying on the ground. And there was the *Dharma devata* protecting his life. He cannot die.

People malign Lord Krishna, saying that he was a scoundrel, he was a cheat, he did so many crooked things to give victory to the Pandavas. But if you go into the spiritual way and look at it, he was the greatest. He was liberating everything. What did he do for Karna? He changes himself into a Brahmin, comes out of the chariot and says, "*Yachakam*". (seeks alms) Karna laughs and says, "What have I got to give you? I am lying dying. Everything I have in this world I have given away. What is left that I can give you? Have you come to shame me here in my last moments?" Then this Brahmin, who is really Lord Krishna, says, "There is still something that you have got: it is dharma that you have accumulated." Karna takes a *kamandalam* (pitcher) of water and he gives it away. Then only his life goes.

This a story which you must all digest. Dharma is not enough. *Adharma* is not enough. Both are equally bad if it comes to the question of mukti. "*Dharmam thalai kakkum*" is a wrong statement. *Thalai kaakkum* in the sense that it will not permit me to die, which the story of Karna has amply testified. If Krishna had not done that last act of mercy to him, taken away his dharma, poor Karna would perhaps still be there on the Kurukshetra field. I would request our respected ladies especially; they should go into the meaning of these things, not just, "*Karnamruthamay irundadu, aha, ennama kathai sonnar!*" ("It was nectar to the ears, what a wonderful story was said!") "*Inda mathiri pesikkondirupathil arthamillai.*" ("There is no meaning in talking like this.") Everything is beautiful to look at. Everything is beautiful to listen to. What does it mean? What is its insight?

There is a proverb in English that a fair face often hides a venomous heart. And it is a question of observation. Not all fair faces hide venomous hearts. Nor, *per contra*, do all ugly faces hide golden hearts. On an average, all people in Kashayam (ochre) are not gurus. Nor are all people dressed in simple T-shirts and trousers, scoundrels.

In today's society, especially, it is a surprise to me that in that land of ancient wisdom, the most ancient wisdom on earth, barring none, people have lost the faculty of recognizing the truth. And they have not changed. We see about it in the Mahabharat, when one of the rishis could not recognize Lord Krishna because he came in the *avatara* of a pig. When he was invited for dinner, all the rishis were there with their food prepared, bathed in the river, *shuddam* (clean) *swachham*, you know, *saannidhyam* — everything was there. Yet Lord Krishna chose to come in lumbering as a wild boar. They beat him with a stick. What is this rishi who cannot recognize the Lord in any *rupam* (form)?

Does it mean if your wife comes to you dressed as Menaka or Parvathi or Savithri, you will not recognize her? "No, no, no, please go away! My wife is not at home." "But I am your wife!" "Chi! How can you be my wife?"

The story of that famous Kalamegam *kavi* (poet): the man was doing *tapasya* for months, years, wanting Sridevi to come and bless him. And there comes Devi, dressed as a prostitute, with a mouth full of *paan* (betel leaves). She taps him on the shoulder and says, "Open your mouth, I want to spit into your mouth." He says, "Chi, *thevadiya* (prostitute). *Naan tapasvi*."

("I am a spiritual man.") Next to him there is a drunken fellow. He says, "*Devi, ennai anugrahi.*" ("Please bless me.") She spits into his mouth and he becomes Kalamegam.

So you see, all this is nonsensical. You find two facets to everything. The greatest rishi is not knowing God. Those who were in constant touch with God, the Kauravas, not knowing Krishna's might. Ravana, who a mere Hanuman could shake, not recognizing that the Lord who sent him must be even greater. The history of India is replete with crudity, stupidity. All because from the time before the Vedas, we have gone to the ritualistic side and forgotten the *Jnana Kanda* (Knowledge). This is well known.

Anybody who has bothered to study Hindu philosophy knows that there is a *Karma Kanda* and the Jnana Kanda. The Karma Kanda gives you nothing except what the mantra promises to do, if at all. If you read the Bhagavad Gita, it is wonderful. How it talks of the *phala* of reading the Gita. If you read one sloka per day, this is what you will get. It starts with the whole Gita, then half the Gita, and then one quarter of the Gita, and then one *adhyaya* per day, then at least one sloka, half a sloka. What can one assume, except that this a way of persuading somebody to start reading, at least out of the temptation for the fruit that it promises? Otherwise you can just say 'Ra' and Ram must come. You may say 'Kri' and Krishna must come. Nobody has experienced it, nor, I would say, is it possible.

In India we have the tradition of naming our sons and daughters after gods and goddesses, in the hope that when our last moment comes, at least in calling your son Govinda that Govinda will come. At least we recognize that we are not going to be able to call God even at that last moment when we need Him most. That which can be *moksha* moment, which becomes possibility of moksha moment. God is not a fool to say, "Because he says Govinda, let Me go. Are you calling Me?" What is the authority?

Draupadi's problem. There she is, screaming to Dushasan, to Duryodan, to the Pitamaha Bhishma. "Help me! Help me! Help me!" Holding on tight to her sari, "Krishna! Krishna!" she shouts — but nothing happens. Ultimately, she says "*Ayyo Krishna enga poyitta.*" ("O, Krishna, where have you gone?") The sari is held, and now it is flowing eternally. Dushasana is almost dying after two hours of pulling on the sari. Later on, she says, "I am your sister. Where the hell have you been?" He says, "Until you are holding, what can you expect me to do? When you said '*Ayyo*' and let go of the sari, I held it."

So you see, we have to let go but we are holding on. "*Vidaappidi*" (holding tight), as we say in Tamil. "No, no, no. My *moolavigraham* I will not give up this picture of Venkatachalapathi. I will not give up, because my great-grandfather put it in the house." If God was to be in the picture, every picture in every house should be a temple.

Now, I don't deny that God is everywhere. That would be a foolish thing to do. Because the Veda says, "*Anoraniyan, mahathomahiyan*" — "I am greater than the greatest, smaller than the smallest. I am smaller than the atom; I am greater than anything you can think of." It is possible for God to embrace within Himself the opposites.

How is man different from God? This is one difference: He can embrace within Himself all the opposites. We are subject to either of the opposites, alternating between the two; now at one end, now at other end; now happy, now miserable; now healthy, now unhealthy; now wise, now stupid.

What should we do to become like God? Bring the opposites together. The Gita is very explicit. It says, rise above the opposites. Go beyond. Don't think of the good and bad of this world. These are **your** judgements. Who said this is good and that is bad? Which God said? If it is good for you, you say it is good. If it is bad for you, you say it is bad. Penicillin is full of, I don't know, viruses, germs, but when you are sick, it is good for you. Not when you are healthy. Aspirin is good when you have a headache. Food is good when you are hungry. But if you are already full, that food is a poison for you.

Nothing in Nature is good or bad. Nothing in Nature is this or that. Nothing in Nature is positive or negative forever. They are always playing between the two poles of polarity, and we succumb to either this pole or this pole, and we are struggling. Spirituality says forget all these things, don't go after the good, and don't exclude the bad. There is no such a thing as a good person or an evil person. The person is always divine, because it is the divine in him that is the real person. Criticize his attitude, criticize his action, criticize his behaviour. Don't criticize him, because he is divine. His **actions** may be bad. The best man has moments of weakness. The wisest man has moments of stupidity. The bravest man has moments of lack of courage. The richest man has moments when he has no money. Contrariwise, the poorest man has moments when he is able to eat at the table of the king.

Swami Vivekananda was the guest of emperors. He was not a beggar. He wandered the whole country in his *kaupina* (loincloth) and one yellow cloth and one *thadi* (stick), and kings and emperors entertained him. Why? See, we must look for these things. His master, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, was a temple-goer, was a priest. What happened to him? As long as he was worshipping Kali and attached to Kali he was stuck. Fortunately for him along came a great saint who said, "What are you doing?" He said, "No no, Maha Kali, Mata Kali, she is with me ever." He said, "Stop this nonsense! Stop this nonsense! Do you want to remain stuck with this great Kali of yours, or do you want to go beyond?" Ramakrishna, a simple man, said, "I don't know. Please tell me." He said, "This is a stage. Go beyond. No gods. No goddesses. The Ultimate," because all these are descents from the Ultimate.

An avatara is a descent from the Ultimate. It comes for a fixed purpose with a fixed capacity, finishes and goes. Krishna came for Kamsa. Rama came for Ravana. Their work was over. They did not redeem the world. If anybody says that there was a Ramarajya at some time, that is again a travesty of the truth — it is wishful thinking. And to expect a Ramarajya when that Rama could not establish Ramarajya in his own lifetime, is a weakness. It is a miserable hope, a hope born of despair, not out of longing.

We have hopes born out of despair. We have hopes born out of longing. We have hopes born out of love. We can see all these three things between a mother and her child, between the father and his child. When our son is doing well, we have hopes born out of faith: "He will surely get into the Indian Administrative Service," or whatever it is you have here, its counterpart. When he is not doing so well, it is the hope of expectation: "No, no, I think he will do well." When he is successively failing, we start praying. Now that is a hope born out of despair. "Andava, do something for this fellow." And why? "*Kudumbathu peyar kedukka poran*." ("He is going to ruin the reputation of the family.") Not because he should survive, he should prosper, but for the family not to lose face — selfishness.

So, our love is selfish, our hatred is selfish also. What is there that is not selfish? Therefore, spirituality says: Do the one thing which you can do for yourself which is yet not selfish, that is, to grow in yourself, divinise yourself, perfect yourself, because that is the aim of life. That is the goal of life. That is the evolutionary goal for which you are born. And in that process, if somebody should say that you are selfish, you can always tell him, "Unless I become something I cannot help you to become something." No teacher can teach who has not studied himself or herself. Nobody can help another with a rupee unless he has that rupee already earned. Nobody can help you to swim who is not a swimmer himself. The first law of those who want to serve is, “Become first that which you seek to help others to do.”

There is no use praying emptily, you see, to empty forms, empty names, in a selfish way: “Let me be great. Let my money grow. Let my children prosper.” All because **I** must have satisfaction. My children must not be pointed at in the state, this is Komalavalli’s daughter, this is Srikrishna’s son, and this is Kumaraaswamy’s grandson — not like that. **My** name should prosper. This is **his** grandson. “You know, Kumaraswamy? This is his grandson. Oh, Thambiah Pillai’s son?” “Exactly. Great family! *Periya paramparai.*” (Great lineage.)

So you see, in everything we do we are selfish. There is only one thing which we can do which is not selfish. Divinising ourselves cannot be selfish because we are already divine in a sense. The divine being in us has what you call the *antaryamin* as the *jeevatma*. All that we have to do is to uncover Him, let His presence manifest itself. He cannot grow — God cannot grow or become small. But we uncover His presence, because **we** have covered it over with the grossness of selfishness, misery, stupidity, vice, virtue, everything. See, even virtue becomes a vice. “*Alavirku minjinaal amirthamum visham*.” (“Beyond a limit even nectar can be a poison.”)

We know the virtuous, how vicious they can be! One who has never sinned, never committed a mistake, is a tyrant. A father who has never made a mistake in his school, is an unbearable father for his children. It is necessary to have a little mistake in our life so that we can be conscious that, “I, too, have made this mistake. Let me be compassionate. Let me be understanding.” Perhaps this is one reason why God comes down as an avatar, to show us that He, too, can be a human being, suffer as a human being, and conquer as a human being. Conquer what? Himself.

So, in the ultimate analysis, spirituality is nothing to do with any god or goddess. It is to do with Him who is in me.

Who is 'me'? I am He. He is me. I have covered Him up, like I have put money in the bank and locked it up in a safe. Open it. Let it loose. Let it flow. Let it be productive. Let it make everybody grow. This is the old basic *aasirvatham* (blessing), as they say: Let everything prosper.

Thank you.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Kuantan, Malaysia
3 December, 1990

Meditation must have a purpose behind it. We believe that the purpose of meditation must be perfection of the self. There are other meditations where they talk of *siddhis*, you know, acquisition of powers of very high orders, awakening the *kundalini*, for instance, or some esoteric benefit like being able to fly in the sky or walk upon the water, things like that.

So, meditation can only be different in its goals. It is like saying, "I am eating." You are also eating, your dog is also eating, and the crow is also eating. The difference is in **what** you are eating. The robber is eating and the saint is eating and the worker is eating. The robber is eating from robbed money, the saint is eating from God-given sources, and the worker is eating from funds that he has earned by work. The eating is the same. Eating as an activity is the same. Meditation as an activity is the same. **How** we do it and **why** we do it — that is the difference. In that sense, Sahaj Marg is not different from anything else; in another sense, it is different from everything else.

Q: What is the need for a Master? Can we not do spiritual sadhana by ourselves and attain the goal?

PR: Yes. There is, ipso facto, no need for a master. I mean, for one who doesn't need a master, there is no need for a master. If I am lame, I need crutches. What is the need for crutches? Well, if I am lame, I need crutches. What is the need for schools? If there are uneducated people in the society, we need schools. Why do we need hospitals? Because there are sick people. Why do we need masters? Because there are people who need them. So, for those who need a master, a master is necessary! That is one answer.

The second answer is, in no subject in this world can you attain proficiency by yourself. In no subject! Starting from the kindergarten school until you do your PhD, you have a guide. You call them professors, you call them guides, you call them masters, you call them teachers — Miss, Master — anything, but there is somebody to guide you through the mazes of education. You need somebody to pilot your plane. You need a doctor to heal you. You need a cook to cook for you. Isn't it? Here also, you need a guide to do what you need to be done for you, to take you through the path which he has travelled himself. When you go to the Swiss mountains you have mountain guides. You don't say, "Why do I need a mountain guide? Can I not do it by myself?" You are always welcome to try. Make sure you are there again to try it a second time!

Q: How does one judge the efficacy of a system?

PR: There is only one way of judging anything in this world — by personal experience. How to know if this mango is sweet? Eat a bit of it and see. How to know that the meal that Susheela is cooking is eatable? Eat a bit of it and see. How to know that my house is clean? Walk in and see. How to know whether this plane will take you safely or not? First, look at the pilot's certificate, then look at the air-worthiness certificate of the plane, then look at the reputation of the airline. Then get in, praying to God like hell! Because there is no surety that all these certificates will function! At one moment in time all are disastrous. So, personal test in one's own experience is the **only** test of a system's effectiveness. There is no other test

Q: How do we know who is the right master?

PR: Yes, that is the difficulty. First of all, your question presupposes that there are many masters. If you are referring to living masters, there may not be so many. If you are referring also to the masters of the past, like Buddha and Christ and Mohammed Saheb, the question has to be phrased differently: whether I can use a master from the past or a master from the present. Some systems say that there was only one master and a second one is never necessary. Christianity does it, for instance. Christians say that Christ came and redeemed the world forever and ever, and no other Christ is necessary. At the same time, they talk of the coming again of Christ. So, these are contradictory things, because what Christ said has become, well, what you would say crystallized, I would say petrified, into religion. Religion is a hardening of the original fluid teaching of the Master.

Now, I always ask one question. Christ was not a Christian himself. If he could achieve his emancipation from this world without being a Christian, why do you have to be a Christian? If Christ could come today down to earth, this would be the first question I would ask him. I would say, "Master, you achieved what you did without being a Christian, but your teaching has become solidified into unnumbered churches of today — not just Catholic and Protestant — there are hundreds of churches. Why should I belong to any church when you did not belong to any church?"

So, the need is for the master, not for his church. Now, which master to choose? It is like which product to choose. The best! It may be expensive, it may be cheap. Sometimes the best is not really the most expensive. That is today's fallacy, that you have to pay a lot of money to get the best. Like you go to America and they sell oranges at two cents a pound, five cents a pound, and eighteen cents a pound. The rich man buys the eighteen cents a pound just because it is bigger and more orange-ish in colour. But the small one is equally an orange and is equally tasty. A one-carat diamond is no better than a ten-cent diamond. A diamond is diamond. But you cannot say, "A master is a master." It depends on where he is taking you. You go to Kuantan railway station. Which is the best train? There is no such a thing as the best train. **Where do you want to go? Which train will take you there? Take that train.**

So, how to choose a master? Choose a master first knowing where you want to go. If your aim is only to see tricks, and things like that, choose a master who can do that. If your aim is only to have your health restored, cancer removed, things like that, go to a master who can claim to do that. Test it. But if your aim is the highest, look for the highest master who can take you there. So, you have to know what you want first. I cannot go to a cloth shop and ask for two kilos of tomatoes. He will laugh at me. Nor can I go to a vegetable shop and ask for a volume of Shakespeare's sonnets. So, I must know what I want and where to look for it. So, I cannot go and stand in the bazaar of Kuantan and ask, "Where can I find a master?" They will all laugh at me. Third thing is where to look.

So, **what** do I want, **who** can take me there, and **where** do I look for him — three things — if you know, it is easy to find a master. When you don't know these things, you are going from pillar to post, going to gurus, astrologers, charlatans, fakes, crooks, losing your money, losing your peace of mind and, most tragic, losing your faith in the whole thing.

Q: Why is there a need for the prayer?

PR: When you come to a system, you have to accept the system in its totality. It is like marrying a girl and saying, "Why is your nose long? Everything else about you is nice." "That was how God created me," she says. If you can afford the money you can go in for cosmetic surgery. But, that is as far as the nose is concerned. What about the shape of the skull? You cannot take a hammer and pound it into shape. So, when you marry, you accept a girl as she is. You take a system as it is, and this system prescribes a prayer; therefore it is necessary.

Q: Why is it mandatory to have three sittings before becoming a Sahaj Marg abhyasi? Is it a form of ritual?

PR: Just because something is repeated it doesn't become a ritual. Nor is three sittings mandatory. It can be anything according to the prospective abhyasi's condition. When you eat bread on a plate, you just rinse it and put it away. If you eat oily stuff, you have to use Vim or something on it. So, it depends on the nature of the abhyasi, his condition, as to how many sittings are necessary. Because, in the preliminary sittings you are only doing the cleaning, so that when the transmission is given, it can be received without augmenting his existing problems. Babuji Maharaj has said that in one case, he had to give twenty-two sittings. It is in the last sitting of the preparatory sittings that the light is introduced into the heart. So you see, there is nothing mandatory about three, nor is it ritualistic. It is as if you say that cooking one potato is natural but cooking ten potatoes becomes a ritual.

Q: Why is it necessary to take individual sittings?

PR: The individual sittings are necessary for **cleaning**. Before you become an abhyasi, we give you a certain number of sittings to clean you, put the light in your heart, and start you on your spiritual progress. Now, we are daily accumulating impressions by our life in this world. They have to be cleaned. If you are not doing the cleaning properly in the evening, there is always some accumulation. So, that has to be cleaned. This accumulation you cannot do yourself, so you go to a preceptor who can help you to do the cleaning, because she is empowered to do the cleaning on your behalf.

It is like having a daily bath. One bath at the time of childbirth is not enough. You have to bathe every day, because daily some dust is falling upon you, some coal is falling upon you. Whenever you are unclean you take a bath, sometimes twice a day, thrice a day.

So, the individual sitting has to be decided by the preceptor. He may say, "Tomorrow you come to me for a sitting." Normally we prescribe at least twice a month for beginners, so that they will go, but if it is necessary, it may be more. So, in individual sittings, the preceptors are expected mostly to do the cleaning. They have nothing else to do. And that is to your benefit.

Q: What is satsangh? Is it important to attend satsangh?

PR: Satsangh is very important. Satsangh really means "To be with the truth." Now, this truth is not the truth that we talk about when we speak the truth — that is something else. This is the truth, which we say God is the Truth — *sat, chit, anandam*. To be with Him is the **real** satsangh. So, if you can be in meditation and be with Him at home, that is satsangh. But this satsangh in the group that we recommend, or, I should say, we insist upon, is for two or three reasons which my Master has elaborated on in some of his books.

The first reason is that group effort is more powerful than individual effort. Also, when you are in a group, you think in the same way, and do things in the same way, so your mind is tuned to a particular activity.

Secondly, a brotherhood is being created. People of different nations, different languages, different religions, different cultures, come together. We want to create a brotherhood, because in this world today there is so much dispersion, division. That is number two.

Third, and most important, is because the Master says so, and we obey.

Q:. There are three aspects of sadhana: meditation in the morning, cleaning in the evening, and prayer at night. Why can't we just meditate instead of doing the cleaning?

PR: Well, I just answered that question. Without the cleaning, it is like saying, "I have a kerosene tin which is empty; please get the milk in that." Without cleaning the thing, you cannot get the milk in it. In a milk can you can bring kerosene, but in a kerosene can you cannot bring milk. So, the purer product, when it enters an impure environment, the impure environment has to be cleaned. This is the idea behind cleaning. This is why you wash vessels before cooking, bottles before filling them, yourself before eating. For this reason it is important. That is why we have to do the cleaning.

The cleaning is making us fit to receive. When you go to a temple, you wash your feet. Before you go to a *puja* room you take a bath, put on fresh clothes, and enter. Always, the association with the higher can only be by your earlier preparation to as high a limit as possible, before it is possible. He may receive you in all your uncleanliness and grossness — if **he** chooses. But from our side it has to be like this. Therefore, the need for cleaning. If you don't clean yourself you get nothing, because the transmission is coming and whatever grossness, the attitudes that are created in you — to tell lies, for instance, or to drink, things like that — the transmission will actually strengthen those tendencies.

Babuji Maharaj said, "If you transmit to a thief, you will make him a perfect thief." Remove the grossness, change his tendencies towards honesty, and **then** transmit to him. Because, transmission is a power. If you push a cart which is already going in one direction, it will only go faster in the same direction. If you are riding a horse and you beat it, it will only go faster in the same direction. Otherwise you have to rein it in, and turn it around and do it. This is cleaning — to give your mind a different orientation, and then push power into it, so that in **that** direction it will go. You are shooting in this direction, suddenly your enemy is here, you cannot continue to shoot in this direction and try to kill your enemy.

Cleaning is, in my opinion, **the most important aspect of the sadhana**, because without cleaning, transmission cannot work. You understand?

Q: What are samskaras? Can there be good and bad samskaras?

PR: Samskaras are created by our mental activity and our physical activities. Anything which leaves an impression upon the mind creates a samskara. So, I don't think that there is any distinction between good samskaras and bad samskaras. A samskara is a samskara. If an elephant leaves its fossilized footprints in some geological stratum, and a human being leaves a similar footprint, both are fossils. You cannot say that the human fossil is more important than the elephant fossil. On the contrary, the elephant fossil may be more important for anthropological research, things like that. So, a fossil is a fossil. The Vedas speak of gold. If you know what is gold, you don't have to look at all the ornaments which are made out of gold, "Oh, this is also gold. This also gold…" Gold is gold. So, anything made of gold, you know, because it is gold, only the form is changing.

So, samskara is samskara. Only its nature changes. Some push you in the direction of this way; some push you in another direction. And you think that it is good or it is bad. In Shakespeare you find that famous statement, "Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so." You think that this is good and that is bad. But another society may think that that is good and this is bad.

We are talking of morality all the time. Therefore, in spirituality we distinguish between the absolute good, and the relative good and bad. This can change. You see, like somebody likes papaya and he says, "Papaya is good." Somebody doesn't like papaya and says, "Papaya is bad." So, good and bad — they have no meaning. Anything which exists can be good or bad, depending upon you. To the earthworm, the earth is very good, and the hole in the earth is very good;

that is its home. But if I put you in the ground in a hole, you won't like it. Which is good? Which is bad?

So, samskaras have no duality of existence, in the sense that there is no good samskara, no bad samskara. You have to get rid of both; otherwise, we come back here again and again.

Q: Is it not possible to attain the goal by serving humanity alone?

PR: Even to serve humanity, you must help yourself first so that you develop the ability to help humanity. Humanity can be helped in many ways. You can feed a hungry man. That is a help. You can feed one man. Can you feed all the people of this world? So, to say, "We are helping humanity," is a very grandiose term. Nobody exists who can serve humanity in its bulk. We only serve individuals. Even millionaires who create big industrial organizations, where they say, "We employ thirty thousand people," it is only thirty thousand people. What is thirty thousand people in the population of even a country like Malaysia? This is a *chota* state (small state) as we call it. What is thirty thousand people in Malaysia? What is three million in Malaysia? It is still less than one fifth of the population.

So, to say, "I am serving humanity," is an arrogance. Nobody serves humanity. God serves humanity. Can I serve individuals and attain spirituality? No! Why? Because spirituality has — like you cannot serve human beings by giving the poor food and educate yourself. You have to educate yourself! You cannot become a professor of history by feeding the beggars of Madras. You understand? And you cannot become stronger by helping crippled people to rise. You are helping them but you are not helping yourself.

So, you must become strong in any field in which you want to help other people. If you want to teach them, you must learn first. If you want to give to them, you must acquire first. He who has no bread cannot give bread to somebody else. It is all right to talk of Christ feeding a whole multitude, as they say, from two loaves and five fishes, but that is a **spiritual** miracle. If you want to help somebody to walk you must learn to walk yourself.

So, the fundamental truth of spirituality is develop yourself first and **then** talk of helping others. Then it is possible. And in what field can you help humanity? Not in the physical field, because humanity is too large. Not even in the educational field, because again, it is too large. But in the spiritual field it is possible, because here you are transmitting something which everybody can receive everywhere at all times. So, spirituality is the only field where service of **humanity** is possible. In every other field, it is only service of groups or individuals. This, please try to understand.

Q: What is *kundalini shakti*? Can a person achieve spiritual progress through the practice of Kundalini?

PR: It is best to forget this altogether, because the kundalini is a dangerous thing. It is only a shakti (power), as the question itself says, and we have no truck with shakti. In Sahaj Marg there is no power, there is no play of power, there is no use for power, there is no importance for power. Power is the ultimate in destruction. The kundalini, especially for women, is disastrous. The *shastras* forbid women from doing anything with the kundalini. In males it is equally destructive, because the kundalini shakti is associated with the sex energy, and many aspiring young people have gone astray because they start with the kundalini shakti, their sex energies become enormous, uncontrollable, and they're off the track.

So, energy, or any power which you want to utilize, you must have the ability to control the power. It is common knowledge in India that in the '*eval oval'* or whatever you say, when you let loose a power on someone, if he cannot be effective, it returns to strike you back. Power cannot be wasted. That is a divine law. If you cannot hit the enemy it comes back on you; it boomerangs, in a sense. And power can never raise you spiritually. *Mukti* is impossible under these conditions.

So, we don't touch the kundalini at all. And, in some cases where my Master awakened the kundalini shakti, it was to give those people the power necessary to do jobs, or his work in spheres other than this world. It is like a catapult; when you want to throw a stone fifty yards, you use a catapult. But you must know how to aim; otherwise you'll break your neighbour's window and they come. "Please pay me fifty dollars or I will go to court." Or you break somebody's head.

So, this play of power, this craze for power is a real craze, and many people have gone not only astray, but have gone mad.

Q: If he is guided by a master?

PR: If he is guided by a master, still it cannot give mukti, because it is not the way of mukti. It is not the way of liberation. It is only a power. You know, by flying in a plane, I cannot reach heaven.

Q: I thought that the kundalini shakti is the awakening of consciousness.

PR: Yes. Consciousness is a vessel, is a vehicle. Power is something which can move you from one place to another. The biggest Boeing jet can only take me in this world. If I take an interplanetary jet, it can only take me between planets. If someday they develop an intergalactic vehicle, it will only take me between galaxies. I am still within the ambit of the physical universe, not out of it.

I suggest that you read the literature on this. The most important book is one called *The Serpent Power* by Sir John Woodroff. It is the most authoritative book on kundalini. Anybody who wants to know further and verify what I say, is requested to read that book.

Q: Chariji, I have met other disciples from other groups and they have spoken of their own masters and so forth, and there are masters who proclaim that they are the people who are going to liberate people in the world today. What are your thoughts on these masters?

PR: I have no comment at all, because we can have two types of people who proclaim themselves and harangue the public. One is the madman, and the other is the charlatan!

One is deluding himself, the other is deluding others. The real Masters never proclaim themselves. My Master used to say, "Be careful of people who say they are Masters!"

Q: What about Jesus?

PR: What about Jesus?

Q: Do you think [inaudible]?

PR: For his time, yes. I believe they have a historical setting in which they work. In Hindu philosophy we have this theory of *avatars*, that God comes again and again. If God could do it sitting there, He could have done it all the time from there. But it is necessary, at least according to the Hindu belief, which is very strong and which is very ancient, that even God has to come here to interact with us in a way in which we can understand what He is saying. It is common knowledge that if you want to play with a child you must become like a child at that moment. You cannot be a professor in your suit and say, "Yes, now wind up the key, and now do this, and now press this button." The child will not come to you a second time.

So, to interact with anything, you have to come down to the level of that with which you are trying to interact. If you want to be friendly with apes or gorillas or orangutans, you know, this famous research into the life of the gorilla in Africa, two people were living there for years, trying to learn how they mutter their language, how they move, becoming one with them, and **then** teaching them. You cannot teach anybody anything unless, in a sense, you come down to their level. So, it is not surprising that God in His wisdom does it. What is the difficulty?

Q: Can you please explain the process of cleaning, how you go about it?

PR: No, no. This you have to read from the books. It is very clear. Do it, feel it, and get confirmed in it. Very clear. Only one suggestion I offer. We don't clean, thinking this is my this samskara, this is my that samskara, this is ice cream samskara... Everything goes! Like when you wash your body, you don't say, "This is the dust from the beach and this is the dust from my factory;" you stand under the shower and you let everything go. The idea is in letting everything go. Now, often, why cleaning is not successful is because we want to hold some samskaras and throw away the rest. That is difficult! It is total or not at all. Physically you can do it. The body, you can clean only the foot, for instance, or wash only your hair. But in the bathtub you cannot do that. Everything is going. In the mental, it is more difficult. In the spiritual, it is impossible. Either all or nothing!

It is the same with devotion. Total devotion or no devotion. You cannot say, "I love my husband sometimes." Either you love him or you don't love him. Isn't it? You may **show** your love for him sometimes, but the love must be there always.

So, the spiritual cleaning is total. Therefore, some people say, "No, no. I would not like to give up some tendencies." So they don't do the cleaning, because they are afraid it may also go away if they really did the cleaning. Therefore they don't do it.

Q: Can memories also go if you clean?

PR: Memory doesn't go. What happens is, as you get more and more absorbed, you lose touch with that memory. It is like a computer. When you want memory to come up, you have to press a particular button, bring the program onto the screen. Isn't it? Memory is there on the disk, but you have to transfer it to the computer memory. That is why every time you change it, you have to save again.

Here also, every time we clean ourselves, we have to save it. So, we find that as people progress, sometimes they become not forgetful, but they cannot easily recollect. Forgetfulness is something, inability to easily recollect is something else. Like erasing memory and storing memory. What you have to do is to transfer your attention for the moment from absorption in the inner self to what you want to do, act, and then go back.

Q: According to the book it says point A and B…

PR: That is for specific cleaning, not for general cleaning.

Q: We should not do it?

PR: No, no. When you are advised to do it, you should do it. Not otherwise.

Q: What are the chakras?

PR: Well, they are there. They are shown in *Efficacy of Raja Yoga*.

Q: What are they?

PR: What are they? It is like saying this is the center of Kuantan. Does it really exist? It depends on how Kuantan is growing. You know, the physical centre can change. Now, when a circle becomes bigger and bigger, the centre is always there. It doesn't change. Isn't it? That is the only figure in which, without changing the centre, the circle can expand. Similarly, in a sphere, if it is expanding three-dimensionally, the centre will always be at the centre. It cannot change. But everything else changes.

So, these are points corresponding to the cosmic regions, related to the Self. Like I have a mind — we say the higher mind of God is in tune with my mind. Or, like your communication centre is your telephone. It is outside you. Your gastronomic centre is your kitchen. Your cleaning centre is your bathroom. These are all outside you. Whereas similar centres from the cosmos, which are translatable into the physical reality of your bodily existence, they are not organs in the body. These centres have no organic makeup, but they are there.

The heart exists as a physical heart. But when you say, “This man has a good heart,” you don’t talk about the physical heart. Which heart are you talking about? When you say, “Oh, this soul is lovely,” you are not talking of this sole — s-o-l-e. It is s-o-u-l. There is a third sole — a type of fish! “Oh, I am going out to catch soles!” It is the work of two people — the fisherman and the Master!

So, by acting here, we act there. Like you press something here and something there happens. It is a remote, like we have the remote microphone and it is working there. So, these are the locational aspects of cosmic centres. When you are working here the result is there. In a sense, it is the ancient art of remote control. Not merely of mechanical things, not merely of electronic things, but of cosmic things. That is how prayer works. You pray here, and it affects someone somewhere. When we say God is there… If there is no rain, you pray to Varuna, and if you are praying right and if he is prepared to listen to you, it rains. So, how does prayer work? It is the same principle of remote communication.

Thank you. It has been a stimulating session.

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SPIRITUALITY IS LIFE ITSELF

Japan
10 December, 1990

I would like to say something; an explanation of what we are doing and what has been said the last few days. The first thing I would like to say is that when we do this, we are doing it for a purpose to achieve a goal. A human being must act and work in two ways all the time. The material, because we are ourselves made of matter; and the spiritual, because we are essentially spiritual. If we understand this properly, we will understand that the material world is not so important.

So, which to do? The answer is clear. One has to be done; one must be done. One has to been done because we are in the body. We have to live. Therefore we have to work; therefore we study, etc. If spirituality is not done, we shall remain only as in matter. Upon this basic understanding we have to develop our life. Master has taught that we must give equal attention to both the material life and the spiritual life.

What happens sometimes in all societies is that human beings emphasize one or the other, but not both. There has been the ascetic way, which is the way of the *rishis*, the way of the saints who did not care about the world, who did not care about the material life. Or, there has been the materialistic way, which does not care about the spiritual life. My Master says you have got to do both, with equal attention and equal responsibility. I think this is the basic wisdom of Sahaj Marg. If you understand this correctly, you will not have to ask, "Should I do this?" or "Should I do that?"

So, necessity is governed by action, not desire. You do what has to done, and not what you want to do. Like water, you know, when you are thirsty you drink so much water. You don't drink six bottles of water, but when it is wine, you drink six bottles of wine.

When I am hungry, I eat enough. When I eat for pleasure, I can go on eating until I all sick. Sahaj Marg distinguishes between what I **need** and what I **want**. I need food, but I want spaghetti. It is our right to do what we need, but what we want is often what we don't need. An important thing which is related to this, is that life must be governed with the idea of growth, development, evolution, and not pleasure and fulfillment. You have this wisdom where our children are concerned. We give them something that will make them grow. But when we grow up, we become stupid and we forget the side of growth. We have wisdom where the children are concerned but we have no wisdom when we ourselves are concerned. So, this is something wrong in society. These two things: need and growth; we give away want and pleasure. It is the right thing.

We have only to ask two questions in any question: "Is it necessary that I do this?" "If I do it, will it enable me to grow in a real sense?" If these two are assumed, 'yes', you can do it, 'no', don't do it. Passion, whether it is free or costs one million yen, it is passion. Passion cannot be good.

So, Sahaj Marg says a third principle: "Be simple in everything." If you thirstily drink water, you will find at twenty-thousand yen a bottle will create more thirst. Eat good food. Why? Because it is good for your health, it does not cost so much. And you don't have to kill yourself to earn more money.

My Master used to say in a laughing way, that even before you want to a question, think whether it is necessary to ask this question. Most of the time we are asking unnecessary questions, because today we have more importance for knowledge. If it is only information, I don't need it.

If we have to go to Los Angeles, whether it is ten-thousand kilometres or twenty-thousand kilometres, it makes no difference. So, again, information is not important. If we have to do something, there are no questions. It is only an idle man who asks a lot of questions, and people who have no intention of doing anything are always asking questions. So you see, questions have really no meaning because what I have to do must be done whatever the cost, whatever the distance, whatever the effort. The only question I have to ask is **how** to do it. Such a question must be asked, and such a question must be answered.

Questions need not be asked because they have no relevance, and they need not be answered because the answer is not necessary. So, wise people say that in the modern world there is too much information and too much information-seeking. This you have to understand.

I have to go to Los Angeles and I don't know where it is. It is not necessary that I ask somebody how to go to Los Angeles. They say, "No train, because you have to cross the ocean, but you can go by ship or you can fly." Now, I choose: ship will take me five months, plane will take me ten hours. My work is urgent, so I say plane. Which plane? They say SAS, KLM, Japan Airlines, Singapore Airlines. What cost? This is cheapest. I have a decision.

Now, the Japanese are very technical people, and always want to ask a lot of questions. Think of the computer. Anybody who knows anything about computers knows that it works with yes or no answers at every stage. The question must be step-by-step. Sometimes you want to know everything at once. That is not possible, number one. Number two, we will not understand it. Going to Los Angeles, I have two possibilities: cheap, fast. Cheap may not be fast, or it may be faster than even the expensive one. So, I make another decision. Like this I go on branching myself, and I am making decisions, not why not to do something, but why to do something.

That is how the computer evolved, using the human brain, which works the same way. So, at every stage we remember this, yes or no, and soon, asking level by level, we get a decision. Master used to say, "Practise, and then ask questions based on practise." Then it is based on a foundation of action. The answer will form the foundation for my actions. If there is not this foundation of action based on the answer, next question based on this foundation of this action, like that it is a waste of time - you can't learn anything.

A little girl learns to cook like this. She pours something and says, "Mommy, what should I do next?" Next you put this. It is waiting to reduce the fire. Step by step.

Why do we join Sahaj Marg? People ask me, "Why do I need yoga?" or "Why do I need God?" A healthy person does not say, "Why should I be healthy?" One who has health does not say, "Why should I be healthy?" A rich man says, "Why I should be healthy?" Always the opposite question. If I have good health, I don't go and ask for health. If I have money, I don't say, "Give me money." But a poor man wants money, a fool wants knowledge, a rich man wants health, so the question affects always that which we don't have.

So, in spirituality, you cannot ask, "Why do I need God?", because without God I cannot exist. It is not a question like having money in my pocket to spend. It is like saying, "Why do I need air?" Without air I cannot exist, because I have breathe. Without food I can exist; without water, no. So, there are some essential things, air and water. Air first, water next, food is only last. Pleasure is way down the line. Anybody can live without pleasure, but nobody can live without water.

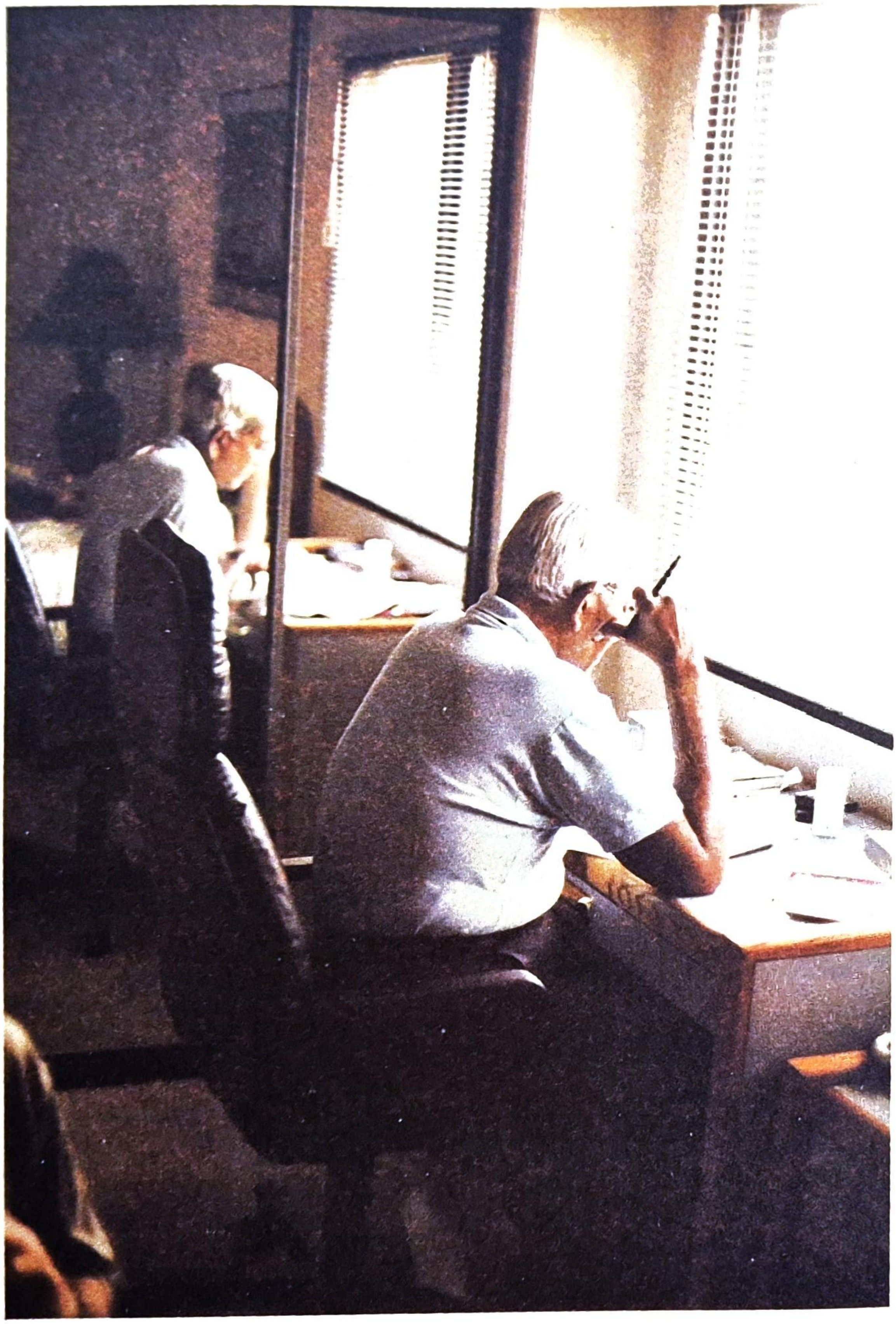
So, we have to go for the essence, and the ultimate essence, that is, the ultimate essence, what you call God, what you call the Self inside yourself, is the same thing as the essence of us. For example, I have to be healthy. But I know that if I am physically healthy, it is not enough. My mind must be healthy, because if this is going back, the body is also going back. You have the old saying that the healthy mind makes a healthy body. Spirituality says a healthy, spiritual life makes a healthy mind, which makes a healthy body. If somebody asks the question, "Is it necessary?", there is no real answer because it is part of existence. It is like saying, "Papa, why should I breathe?" Without breathing, the child would not be there to ask the question. It would be dead.

We cannot say it necessary; we cannot say it unnecessary. It exists. That's all. Like I have to breathe, whether I like it or not. My Master says spirituality is life itself. With the spiritual life comes the material life. So, that is the origin and this is the effect. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

VI

USA

11 to 19 December, 1990



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PAIN

Los Angeles, California, USA
11 December, 1990

Maha Kali was talking of memories. She graduated from Cali to Kali to Maha Kali. She forgot the third. One thing with memories, or rather there are two things. Why do we go back, either in time or in space, to look for memories? Because we think they are happy memories. It is an illusion. What we cannot find in the present, we are not going to find in the past. Even if it did exist there, it is of no more use to me than the bread I threw away yesterday, and for which I am hungry today. If I find it, I'll find it in the gutter, or in the stomach of some tramp, or in a dog's stomach. It is not going to be edible bread any more. This is one reason why we should not look backwards. Either it is here or it is in front of us. It is not behind us, by any means. It cannot be captured again.

The second thing is, memories are like roses: soft, tender, sweet. But unfortunately, when we go back in time we find the petals have dried and blown away, and all that is left are the twigs and the thorns which have hardened with time, and prick you all the more. If they still exist, you have only the thorns, the flowers are gone.

So, in these two ways we damage ourselves by going back, looking for things which we have not, in things which we had. It is like when a child is deficient enough to have to sleep with the teddy bear that it had as a child. There are even adults who still have their teddy bears, the wife on one side and the teddy bear on the other. I'm not joking, this is a real life situation. I have come across it in one of my, shall I say, intimate talks with one of our abhyasis. Naturally enough, it was the wife who came to me and said, "What do I do with this guy?" [laughter] "He has this teddy bear with him all the time!" It is a sign of continuing infantile tendencies when we look back.

Thirdly, there is that famous image of a man who is going towards the sun. In front of him it is all light, and you turn around and see your own shadow lengthening and lengthening. You say, "Is it frightening?" It's your own shadow. So, never look back, because backwards is the shadow, forwards is the light.

When we do this cleaning that we are supposed to do systematically every evening, I don't know how memories can remain any more, because memories are traces left behind, like samskaras. Because of memories we suffer and we enjoy. Even the spaghetti that I am going to eat tonight, assuming that I am going to eat spaghetti tonight, is appreciable in advance, and is sought in advance, because of a memory of the spaghetti that I ate yesterday, or the day before yesterday. If I hadn't eaten spaghetti ever before, I wouldn't know what to look for, even as spaghetti. I wouldn't know the name at all. How on earth can somebody look for spaghetti if he doesn't know what is spaghetti? It would be as stupid as saying Madame Curie set out to discover radium and discovered radium. You cannot discover something which you have already discovered.

So, a voyage of discovery like ours must go forwards in time, must ever meet newer situations, unique situations. The situation, in itself, has nothing. Sometimes it appears appalling, disastrous. Sometimes it appears full of joy and rejoicing. Sometimes it seems glorious. This is our response to a situation. You look at a mountain covered with snow, and some people go into ecstasy. I, for myself, would run away from that. Both are samskaras. Anyway, I don't care for the snow, I don't like the cold. I hate mountains. But these human shaped goats that like to climb mountains are manifesting their goat tendencies, climbing up, jumping from rock to rock, digging themselves in the snow, eating out of cans, and pretending to have fun. It's all a pretence, it's a sham. The same goes for people who get into the water and seek corals and fish through glass panes, flippers on their feet. If God wanted me to swim like a fish, He would have given me fins.

Very often the Western people, the Occidental people think I am pulling their legs. I am, of course, but there are deeper truths implied in this criticism of certain ways of life. Life is not to be wasted on flippant searches for pleasure and adventure. Life was not meant to be enjoyed. One doesn't get into a train for a pleasure ride; one gets into a train to get somewhere, go somewhere. Only a fool would look for the best coach, irrespective of where the train is going. "Why are you sitting in that train in platform number seven?" "Well, because the seats are upholstered nice." "Yes, but it is not going where you want to go." "It doesn't matter, I am out for a ride." That's why you say, when someone is being cheated, "He was taken for a ride." Lovely ride, upholstered rides, perfumed rides, enticing rides. Then we come back with less than we went with.

So you see, any spiritual aspirant who is serious about this business must first understand that life is not to be enjoyed. This is a very serious truth, which is sort of dinned into our heads in India — not by our parents, because by and large, they, too, lack this wisdom — but by circumstances. I am happy that India is such a poverty-stricken, stupid, ignorant land. If it ever becomes affluent like the West, spirituality will disappear forever.

As I said sometimes, if you want to squeeze toothpaste out of a tube, you've got to put pressure. You don't say, "Oh lovely toothpaste, oh charming toothpaste, oh beautiful pink toothpaste. How can I squeeze you?" Unless you squeeze something, even if it is a California orange, unless you squeeze it you don't get any juice out of it. And it's the juice which is important.

So, abhyasis should remember that they are here to be squeezed, squeezed dry. There is no use in leaving half a glass of juice behind in the orange. What for? So that it can drink itself? The orange doesn't drink itself or eat itself. We drink it. What's the use of leaving something behind there? "Oh, you know, when I came to Master all my miseries started." Of course! What else is he here for? You go to the doctor. He gives you an injection. "Oh, Doctor, I didn't come to have a prick here, you know. I came for relief." "Yes, my dear friend, but without this prick you are going to have many more bigger pricks and bigger cuts later. A timely prick saves a lot of cuts in the future." If that doctor is foolish enough to look at your lovely face and say, "Oh, Kali, how can I give you pain? Let me do something else for you. I sympathize," Kali will come back sicker next time and sickest the third time, lastly to be carried out by eight people.

Don't look for tenderness. It is a big mistake. Even my Master has been thoroughly misunderstood by everybody here. They think of him as a tender, loving person. He was. He was tender to himself. He was loving to his Master. Towards us, he was neither loving nor tender. I would like to emphasize this again and again, because we are dealing with a fantasy when we think Babuji Maharaj was something like a rose petal. He appeared to be a rose petal. But I have never known anybody harder than him when it came to his teaching and to his requirements of obedience and discipline.

Discipline is not only being shouted at, you know, like Hitler used to shout at and harangue the Germans. There is a quieter way of enforcing discipline, which is more painful. There at least you have the luxury of disobedience. You can say, "Oh, get the hell out of here, Hitler. I don't want you. I didn't ask for you." But when a man is so soft and gentle and looks so piteously, you know, like some of these dogs look at you when you don't take them out for a walk, you feel like weeping. And that dog knows its business, eh? It sits there patiently, looking at you dolefully, you know, big brown eyes, and you say, "Oh, Sarah, come on." Little wag of the tail, little twitch at the end. "Sarah." "Bow-wow!", and you are lost. Next thing, it brings a leash to you and you are in for a five-kilometre walk, which you didn't want but she (Sarah the dog) wanted.

My Master was like that. He knew how to get the best out of us by not wanting from us anything. Because if he had told us what he wanted we would have run away from him. He was a very clever man — the cleverest. He didn't preach, he didn't teach, he didn't ask. "What should I do?" "I am telling you, meditate." "How should I meditate?" "Just do as you are doing." "What is cleaning?" "Well, it is very simple, I am telling you. Just sit and imagine everything is going out." "Oh lovely, just going out like smoke and vapours, eh." "Yes, but Babuji, it didn't go." "I am telling you, sometimes it can take time."

He was telling us all the time — "telling you, telling you, telling you." That was the bait thrown into the river. And the salmon falls for it. Even after it is hooked, it tries to run, and the fisherman who knows his job lets it run, allows the spool to unwind. Do it until you are so tired that I can just reel you in with a flick of my little finger, and then a quiet bash on the head and it goes into the bag.

This is true spirituality. Anybody who thinks they can come here and enjoy and sit in luxury and be well fed and hear the Master's jokes over and over again, look into his eyes, gazing into infinity, well, they are in for a big disillusionment.

I have seen all these things, and if I exist today it is because I knew the reality behind those things. Always human qualities go hand in hand. If there is softness outside there must be steel inside. If there is tenderness outside there must be solidity behind it. Otherwise, he couldn't have done his job. What was his job? He didn't do it for himself; he did it for us. We have to understand that we should not be bothered, or seek, or even be deterred by circumstances.

Some abhyasis come to me and say, "Oh, ever since I started Sahaj Marg, miseries have started happening." We have a saying in Tamil which says, "A crow came and sat on top of a palm tree and a palm fruit fell down," as if the crow is responsible for it. That fruit which is ripe enough to fall will fall. A puff of wind can blow down all the apples, as any Englishman knows. That is why it is called a windfall — that which you didn't pluck. That is how money is made, too — in windfalls. Now, if you are happy about a windfall bringing you apples, why not a windfall which brings you a ton of misery, which would have taken you a hundred years to work off, bit by bit by bit? Little injection after little injection after little injection, day after day by smiling doctors and even more smiling nurses? In one grand stroke — finished! Any wise person should go to a doctor and say, "If you have to kill me, kill me, but pull out this damn thing from me, in one stroke."

Imagine a woman having a baby which is being delivered centimetre by centimetre. It would take you all of eternity. You scream on that delivery table, "Is it over?" Then you are happy and say, "Look at my baby!" Always pain must be there before every great act of creation is established. Women who run away from pain and want Caesarean operations are the most stupid things on earth. If it is medically necessary, yes. But today, you know, it has become a modern craze. "Oh, I cannot bear the pain of delivery." Why not? How do you know it is going to be painful? How do you know the pain of a Caesarean is going to be any less, just because you are drugged and put under anaesthetics? The doctors who do this to patients just because they get fat fees are criminals.

We are taught to run away from pain. 'Pain control', somebody called it this morning, and I suggested that is the wrong usage. It is pain suppression. It is like suppressing truth. When there is pain in the human system it is there for a purpose. It is a warning that something is going wrong. Be ready! But we ignore all these things, you see — drug ourselves, no pain. Six months later we find out we have a cancer, we have this, that, and the other. "Oh, but what happened, doctor? I never felt any pain." "Were you taking aspirin?" "Yes." "Perhaps that is the cause."

So you see, pain must be there. We know the human system has been so beautifully engineered that the pain that cannot be borne makes you go into a coma or just lose consciousness for the moment. There are safeguards built into the system which these doctors ignore, criminally ignore, because they are materialistic, and we fall into their traps. "Please give me something for the pain." Now when you go to the spiritual Master, on the other hand, if he is worth the salt that he is eating, he should say, "Which pain? You call this pain? Aren't you ashamed to call this pain?" A prick on the finger, a child can come, saying, "Mommy, mommy, it is painful!" You kiss it and say, "It's okay," and the child is happy. You come suffering with the same prick and want medicines for it!

So, Babuji had this enormous potential to suffer. And if you said, "I have had a headache for ten years," he replied, "I am telling you, I was telling Kasturi only yesterday morning that I have been having it for twenty-two years." What can you say to a man who says, "I have been having it for twenty-two years," and you only had it for ten? "I am hungry." "Yes, in my abhyas often I had no food." "I have been reviled by my bosses and my assistants." Then he gives you the story of the clerk in the court, when he was a clerk and his bosses were always belittling him, insulting him.

So, for every pain you had, he could produce a bigger pain of the same category. You lost your child. "I am telling you, my son shot himself. Look here, I am telling you, for one week I wanted to remove the gun and put it away somewhere, but Nature did not permit it because he had to die in that way." Now, how can you go on weeping in the presence of a man who lost an adult son at the age of nineteen by suicide in his own house? And you are whimpering and weeping for a baby which is lost.

You have to sympathize with him, and in sympathizing with him you forget your misery. You cannot give up pain except by sympathizing with somebody else who has suffered. When you are able to do this, then comes the possibility of loving human beings. All the other is nonsense when they say, "Oh darling, how much you are suffering. Have a bit of this seedcake. It is good for you." That's English countryside. A seedcake is good for everything. In some places it's wine, in some place it's a kiss, in some places it's a hug, but all this is useless unless you can love. And he who has not suffered cannot love.

You can put this upon the walls, along with those two photographs: "Without pain, love is not possible." Whose pain? Your pain. If you seek to love — bear pain first. If you seek to love infinitely — bear infinite pain. "No, no, I am afraid of pain." No love! Because, I can say that love is nothing but the other name of pain. It is not two things. To me, pain is love, love is pain. It is not that one who loves suffers pain. What is this 'suffering pain', as if it is something coming from somewhere? He who loves suffers pain.

Pain is not something else which is attracted because of your love. It is the price that love extracts from you, because love is pain. So, you cannot have love without pain, you cannot have pain without love. If you just go into this whole business of pain and suffering, you'll find at the base there is always love. And the man who you imagine is giving you the pain, the Master, is very reluctantly giving it. He weeps for our pain. He apologizes in advance, like a good doctor who says, "I'm sorry I have to inflict this little pain on you. Just a prick, you won't even feel it." Or, like one doctor I knew, who used to make us lie on our tummy, and on the bare behind he would put a cross of tincture, I think, in those days. He had his own technique. He would just, you know, throw the injection needle like a dart and just fix on the syringe, and would say, "Oh!" [points across the room], and you are looking there, and the whole thing is done here [points to hip]. Nobody felt any pain there, because he did it with so much love, with so much compassion, because he had suffered the same pain an infinite number of times. Because he suffered with every patient who was suffering.

Today's doctors are enjoying while their patients are suffering, they are giggling away in corridors, drinking tea and coffee, making fat fees. What do they know of love? It is a shame, you know, this profession which preys — p-r-e-y-s — off other's pain. It stinks. On the contrary, if they were conscious of the Hippocratic oath that they took, and suffered along with those who are suffering in their clinics, they would be saints. I mean, more than anybody else I can think of is a doctor who, true to the profession, can love his patients, die for them, die with them every time. They don't need any spiritual practise. We need spiritual practise. We need to be trained to bear pain and to love, while they have a golden opportunity, a ready-made opportunity.

This opportunity Nature gives to the women. Every time you have a baby, there is love. It is a fruit of love; it should be a fruit of love. In love there is pain. The result of love is pain.

But then, you know, you bear pain for a few hours and then you have an eternity of love. Isn't it? Which woman would not have a child again, unless she is such a stupid person that she has never had a baby because of this fear?

People ask, "Why only in India and these other countries there are so many babies?" It is a manifestation of love. We are not concerned with the economics of babyhood and having babies. "Two cars are enough, no child." "When I have a bigger bungalow, then we will have a baby." By then they are forty, they cannot have a child, and then they are coming, running to the guru. "What shall I do now? Should I adopt?"

The reason is that in all these poorer countries there is so much love, there is so much compassion, there is so much sympathy, because everyone is suffering, and each one is sharing the suffering of the other. In that mutuality of sharing, of pain, there is a mutuality of sharing love. Therefore, you have so many babies, and that is the flower of humanity. Through them, these underdeveloped people find the joy that is denied to them by material lacks. People of my country, and countries similar to mine, where we have to dig for every potato root, we don't look for sofas and air conditioners, we look for babies. They are called flowers of God, and they give us the joy which in every other way Nature had denied to us. Why? Because Nature says, "Stupid, this is the only true joy which you can accomplish in your life that, not being the Creator, yet you are creating. In this, more than anything else, you are coming closest to divinity. You are like Me in my creative function," says God to such people. And we run away from that.

So you see, don't run away from pain. If Master says, "Accept miseries as blessings of God," it is the lesson. If you are going to be afraid of pain and lie down and say, "No, no. If I meditate, every time I sit down to meditate I get a headache." Do it. I have been having headache for, I don't know, nearly fifty years now, and whenever I go into deep meditation, as happens at every meditation, you don't know the enormous headaches I get, leg pains, this, that, and the other. It's a funny thing! The deeper I slip into *samadhi*, the more painful it is. Now why? I have often thought about this. I asked Babuji. He never gave an answer. He always hedged. He would take me to the doctor. He would take me to a native doctor. He would feel my pulse, he would give me a sitting and say, "This nerve [pointing to his left temple] is swollen." All the tricks of the trade. But he never gave me the real answer which is, that in some way I am being delivered of my Self.

Mothers only deliver babies. Abhyasis deliver themselves as their own babies, and in that sequence of delivering yourself of your Self is, I think, the ultimate cosmic pain. This is perhaps what we find in the teachings, that Christ was crucified; he had to bear the ultimate pain. The crucifixion is perhaps a myth. But how else to exemplify the absolute suffering and pain of being a saint, a liberated soul? Crucifixion, being burned at the stake — it doesn't matter whether they are historical truths or not. The truth is the pain. The pain which makes a Christ say from the cross, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?", not remembering that, in the moment of that delivery, pain, and screaming, he is being delivered afresh.

Religion stops with describing the twice-born. Once, when we are born from the womb of the mother. The second, when we are initiated into a system as an initiate and accepted by the Master as such. The third is delivery from the self. I have not seen this idea mentioned anywhere yet, that we are thrice-born. It is not enough that we are twice-born. I see Brahmins around me everywhere. They are twice-destroyed, not twice-born. It is the third birth of your Self from yourself, I think, that matters, and that must be one of absolute pain. So, everything that we do, everything that we suffer in our life, must be the training to bear it more and more.

You see, the funny thing is that pleasure doesn't give you any training. You drink a glass of wine and you get pleasure. You drink a second one and you get a headache, a third one and you are vomiting and making a disgrace of yourself, spoiling hundred dollar dresses, losing your boyfriend or your girlfriend, whichever it may be. But pain suffered more and more, gives you infinity in your grasp. Pleasure gives you nothing — 'dust and ashes', as they say in the Bible.

So, why are we after pleasure? Any wise person should shun it, you know, "Get thee behind me, Satan." But we are running away from pain and seeking pleasure, which should be the opposite. We should run away from pleasure and seek pain. This is what the yogis of India did. Aloneness, aloofness, self-centredness, sitting on beds of nails — all this trash. Those were extreme physical ways, but spirituality says seek the inner reality of pain. Pain on a bed of nails is no more than an arrow from an enemy's hand or a shot by an assassin. That is compulsive pain. You must be able to suffer without external sources of suffering. I mean, it would be stupid to go into a boxing ring and say, "Punch me on the nose Fred, because I want to be a saint." He would be too happy to punch you twice, because he probably has a lot of things against you which he would like to work off. He would say, "What a happy chance. Chari, let me punch you three times and get you there in one shot." It doesn't work that way.

Therefore people who suffer — not voluntarily, but compulsively, by their nature, by their samskaras, like beggars, lepers — they don't become saints. Why? Because it is not accepted suffering, it is only borne suffering (b-o-r-n-e). If, by circumstances of my birth, I have to live a painful existence, it does not qualify me for liberation or for spiritual progress. Everyone has to **bear** it, but he who **accepts** the pain as being a result of past samskaras, has an attitude which is conducive to spiritual progress. That is why there is the tradition of voluntarily accepting sufferings. Going beyond that is praying for suffering. An English author, I think it was Lloyd C. Douglas, has used this idea in his novels, when his chief character suffers in advance, as it were.

For pain there is no limit! I mean it. The more one bears pain, the more one is **able** to bear pain. It appears that one's capacity to bear pain increases as one bears pain with an attitude of acceptance. Pain makes one stronger and stronger. The more one **accepts** pain, the stronger one becomes. This strength goes on increasing. I feel that eventually one develops the capacity to bear infinite pain, and then one becomes like God. God is infinite pain, rather one who has the capacity to bear infinite pain! This is my idea.

Therefore, spiritually speaking, pain is a necessity. I don't mean that one has to seek pain, like some misguided ascetics, sleeping on a bed of nails, walking on fire, self-mortification, and so on. But one must not refuse it when it comes! Pain, borne with an attitude of acceptance, works off our samskaras. And please remember, what we cannot bear, He, the Master, takes upon Himself. Kabir has written about this, that God as the Self bears from within us the pain that we cannot bear. So, the Master permits us to bear what we can, and takes upon Himself the rest.

Pleasure has no value. It only creates more desire for more pleasure, and creates more samskaras. Therefore, the Masters are not for pleasures. Because if a Babuji were to take the pleasures of all of us, he would probably get drunk and drown himself in a ditch on the wayside. There goes another fallen saint. You understand? So, they shun pleasure, accept pain, welcome pain, pray for pain, because if for one moment that pain is removed, they may fall into the trap of a good life, a pleasurable life. So, to keep them on their toes, spiritual toes, as it were, they say, "God, give me everlasting pain that I may not forget you." Because in pain we call for God, in pleasure we call for our selves — the lower self.

So, this is the reality of pain, and if Kali discovered it in San Diego, she could have discovered it long ago in Shahjahanpur, sitting on a well where we had a long talk about this. I think she has forgotten it, maybe. That, too, was a painful episode then, but life is full of painful episodes. Like every time you climb up a staircase, every step is a pain. But step after step, of pain after pain, takes you to the top. That's why we climb up stairs even when there are escalators or elevators, at least once a day to keep ourselves fit.

Similarly, we should suffer a little pain every day. If it doesn't come your way, seek it. Then you will find that your life becomes ennobled, enriched. After all, nothing cooked can be cooked without being put on the fire. Gold has to be smelted in fire, dross burnt off, metal purified. That's why you don't take the golden ore as it is and sell it. You have to refine it. Hundred tons of ore giving you a gram of gold. Here we have this eighty-kilo structure [pointing to the body] with a weightless soul inside. How much refinement it must need? How much fire, how many bellows being blown to heighten the fire? And we must build such a fire that cannot be extinguished.

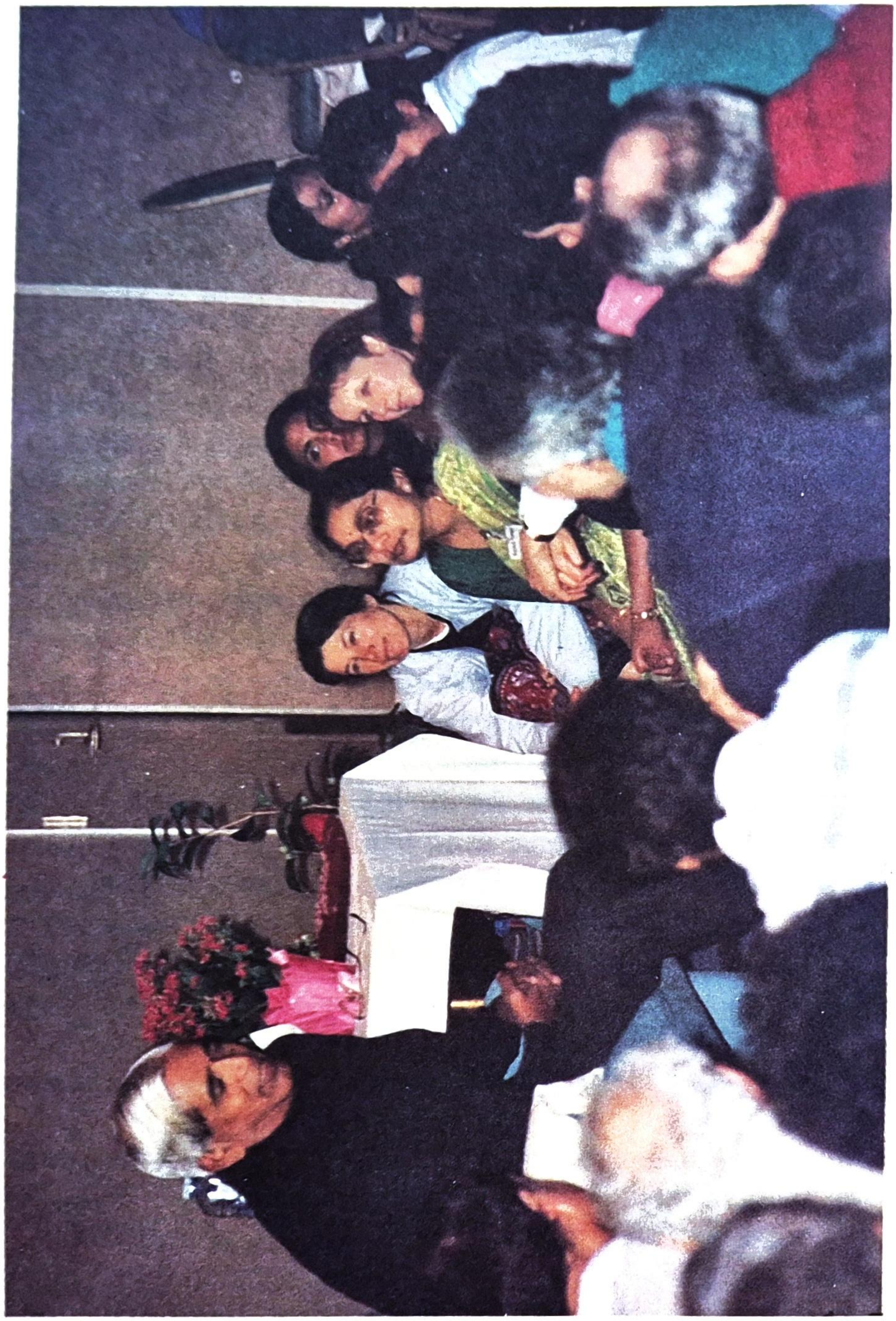
It is said by one famous, I think, Confucian wise person that the only difference between a lit match and a forest fire is, one can be blown out, the other cannot. Both are fires, but we are only lighting matchsticks. We should build such a conflagration that it will consume us in one instant. Your whole purpose, your whole life's purpose is achieved. But instead of that we are burning matchstick after matchstick, achieving nothing. More and more expense, more and more indulgence in burning matchsticks, more and more of self-delusion. No matchsticks. I think this is also the idea, perhaps, behind the *sati*, in India when a woman went to the funeral pyre of her husband and immolated herself. When he who is the source of my everything is gone, what business have I to exist here?

So, avoid memories. As I told you, if at all you find anything, it is only the thorns of the rose. The rose has gone, and we don't want thorns. It is better to seek it in a living rose where, even though there are thorns, there is yet the flower. Such a rose is the Master, blooms galore, renewed petals, fragrant, soft, everything. But there are these hidden thorns of the spiritual life. But remember, as Kabir said, "He bears the pain Himself, allowing us to bear only a very little," for our good, for our growth, for our ennoblement.

He is no less than this automatic nature of ours which makes us lapse into unconsciousness when the pain threshold is exceeded. He is the ultimate Nature himself, the ultimate mother herself who, if she could, would bear even that little pain. But that cannot be done; even Nature would not permit it. I asked Babuji once, "When you take away so much, why don't you take this little thing, too?" He said, "Without that you wouldn't be here. You could not grow."

So, please remember that the pain that we bear is only an infinitesimal portion of what we should have borne and which the Master, in his real concern for us, permits us to suffer because it is good for us. It will strengthen us, it will glorify us, it will ennoble us, it will make us progress. If he removed that, too, we would slip back into the joyous life, and then we are lost forever.

Thank you.



37

INFORMAL CONVERSATION

El Segundo, California, USA
11 December, 1990

PR: What are we talking about all this time? The search for happiness, meaning, identity. Babuji Maharaj said that the identity goes last. Even the greatest persons have an identity. It is only at the point of merger that identity is lost, because you are losing yourself, and nobody wants to lose himself or herself.

Abhyasi: And afterwards they are glad.

PR: Yes. That's why all our conventional life is failing, because we can never let ourselves go completely. Always that self has to remain, and where the self is, there is selfishness. Isn't it? Only in letting yourself go totally, preparing to sacrifice your identity entirely is selfishness lost forever. Till any, you know, even an iota of self remaining, that selfishness will be there. Therefore, even in love there is selfishness. Yes, of course.

You love your child and you expect so many things from the child. Therefore, children of today say, "My mother is blackmailing me with love." It has become a weapon of blackmail. "No, no, I love you so much. Should you not be able to please daddy? He comes back so tired. He works his fingers to the bone." Nonsense. He's working for his bank account, and among his other possessions are his children. If he has great fur coats and armoires full of clothes and two cars, his image suffers if his child does not come up to his needs, so he thrusts this need of his upon the child. Tells lies, that a rose bush cannot produce anything thing else other than a rose.

So, we are always cheating and lying and blackmailing others, including our children, our wives, our fathers, our mothers, ourselves. How do we blackmail ourselves? "Oh, I can be happy, Chari, if I have a new model of this BMW car." You get it. The moment you have got it, you are disappointed. Then you want, what is this new one — Lexus. I am very fond of that car because, you know, the dashboard is hidden and everything comes out as a hologram. You don't touch it. The panel doesn't exist. It's hidden somewhere inside. So, I would love to own a Lexus. [laughter] So, out goes the BMW and in comes the Lexus. Then you want to set the time and you don't know where the knob is, because the watch, too, is hidden away somewhere in the interior.

It is like our hearts. Sweetheart, yes, but where is the sweetness? Even the heart you cannot see. As somebody said, difficult to wear your heart on your sleeves. Where else will you wear it? Like a diamond buried twenty-seven miles below the crust of the Earth. Of what use is it to me? So, it must be there for others to benefit from. "No, no, I'm afraid of being exploited." Then you have no business to be in the field of human beings, leave alone spiritualists.

We are here to be exploited. I mean, our whole life is one of exploitation. Exploiting the plants, the trees, robbing them of their fruit, of their honey. Exploiting living things for their butter and milk, for their meat. What is it that we are not exploiting? And we say, "Oh, but God in his immense mercy provided nature for our use." This is the ultimate humbug, you see, that God created this universe so that man may be happy. "Go forth and multiply." Ah [chuckling], multiply what? Misery.

This is where religions have lied and religious preachers have lied, and we have fallen for those lies ourselves and we continue those lies ourselves, because it is tradition that speaks, and what tradition says cannot be a lie. "And the fishes of the sea and the birds of the air, these I have created for you," God told Adam. What a magnificent thing it is. What a lovely God. Then there is a woman, and you make love to her, and you have sinned, and you are thrown out of that Garden of Eden. If you ask that God, "Damn fool, you provided everything. Why did you throw in this woman, too, for me?" He says, "Thou has chosen." Chosen what?

So, you see this literal failure of Christianity. There are not real answers. Every religion fails in the same way, that they have not given answers, but only contrived answers, and they are not satisfying. Spirituality says, don't look for it outside, look here for the answers, inside you. Then you will find them. "Seek ye and ye shall find." But where? Seek within. Isn't it? That is the message of spirituality, why we meditate and not look outwards.

Abhyasi: Ten more minutes.

PR: All right. If it is to be ten, it might as well be twenty-five.

Abhyasi: We have twenty minutes.

PR: Till eight o'clock.

Abhyasi: Then they kick us out, then they clear us out.

PR: Oh, we have to leave at eight, is it? Five to eight we will move.

Q: To give up our identity, what is it that's the most important — willingness?

PR: Well, constant remembrance is the first and most potent technique, because when you remember something you cannot remember yourself, too. So, in anything that you do, if you are remembering yourself, you are forgetting the other thing, because the mind cannot hold two things in its memory. The most important thing, the most, as I told you, infallible technique: remember Him. We don't have to forget anything else. They are not in our field any more. But nobody practises the constant remembrance. Babuji said if you can do it for one week then you cannot stop it.

Now, we call upon him at need, which means we are using him very much like a servant. You may say, "Darling, can you get me a glass of water?" But all that 'darling' and, you know, 'can you' or 'will you get me', is a polish — society, etiquette. The real thing is, "Get me a glass of water," when the Indian orders his wife, "Get me a glass of water." You uncivilized fellows, they are ordering their wives around, but you only doing it in a polished way: "My darling, will you get me a glass of water, please?" She has as much choice or freedom of refusal as the Indian wife. A 'darling' doesn't make it; it's the sugar coating on the bitter pill.

So, etiquette is a corruption. Etiquette hides. It doesn't mean we should be savages. We should be natural. Opening the door for the woman whose throat you are going to cut. "Walk into my parlour," said the spider. It is in your fairy tales, isn't it, and your romances? We should be natural. What is natural is natural. What is not natural is unnatural. Why all this politeness and falsity of behaviour, so that we create two selves — one external, one internal. We are splitting ourselves. See, schizophrenia is born like that. It is not a psychological disease, yet we are taught to create it from our childhood. "Don't talk like that. Aunty will not appreciate it." "No, no, but my teacher made a mistake in school." "Don't talk like that, stupid. You won't get marks. She will fail you." Smiling exterior, hating interior, and slowly this hiatus is widening, and eventually you have a Jekyll and a Hyde we created. Then we want psychiatrists. What on earth for?

So you see, all diseases are, in that sense, themselves created. Now, when you remember Him and you have not even remembered yourself, there can be no sickness, no disease, no suffering, no pleasure, nothing. He is. That is the reality. Then who is this you are remembering? Me. Who is this me? Am I remembering? That should be this real state. You must even forget that you are remembering. Remembering becomes an existence, no more an action or an activity. "Oh, I love my husband so much." When you are conscious of that love, it is no more love. Isn't it? Any consciousness that you love someone is an unnatural state. You are also not conscious of the other thing, which is hatred. The duality comes.

So, there should not be this idea that "I love." Don't you love Master? "Oh, what is that business of loving?", you must be asking. You should not know. Can you define love, for instance? It may manifest in so many ways, but they are not love, they are only manifestations. Like disease is manifested in one way or the other, but the disease itself, as they say in homeopathy, is some sort of a miasma which you cannot touch or feel or sense. You only see the symptoms. Therefore, homeopathy says treat my symptoms. Some logic in it.

So, when you see a pleasant smile on the face of one you go to visit, you say, "Oh, she loves me, you know. Whenever I go to her house she greets me with a smile." That blighter, you know, he always frowns when he sees me — the Master. Why does he frown? Because he sees your condition is damaged. Now to whom should we really go? To the fellow who is frowning. Yes, like a good doctor would say, "What have you done with yourself, for heaven's sake?" Isn't it? "Oh, you look wonderful." No good. How can somebody go to a doctor and look wonderful? Hopefully after, but not before!

Good night.

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ALLOW HIM TO COME INTO YOU

Los Angeles, California, USA
12 December, 1990

Those of you who are in contact with those who are not here — I don't mean in esoteric ways, but to telephone [chuckles] — kindly pass on this message, that I would feel it a big privilege to have them here with me when I am here. For those of you who are here, please put your heart into the thing that we are going to do and take. Because, for the future, with the Mission expansion going at the pace at which it is going, we may not have any opportunity of meeting together like this, face-to-face.

The system is infallible. It doesn't need face-to-face meetings. But, given human nature and human dependence upon human beings, face-to-face situation seems to be necessary and, when it is possible, we should make the best use of it. I have the perennial request, the often-repeated request for your support for Mission activities in all its forms: physical support, monetary support, moral support, emotional support. As the Mission grows, it needs to grow in strength as well. Otherwise, it is like a balloon which is inflated, and the more the inflation the sooner it is going to burst.

So, please put your heart into this Mission, please put yourself into the Mission, put yourself into the Master. And, as my Master said so often, "Allow Him to come into you." This is the purpose of our meeting. This is the goal of our sadhana. This is the goal that we all aspire to. And, if he is to come into you, you have to be open to him, to receive. One who is closed cannot receive anything. All the other ways of co-operation are only ways of opening yourself, and I hope and pray that these few days together will be of benefit to all of you.

So, now we start meditation.

39

ACCEPTING PAIN

Los Angeles, California, USA

12 December, 1990

Some amplification about pain. It's a nice subject to talk about. [laughter] Yes, because we don't understand what it's all about, and is it not when you don't understand something you look it up and learn more about it? Why not learn more about pain? It is a fact of life and we should know how to get on with it, how to use it, how to develop using it. That is what knowledge is about. Knowledge is not about the known but about the unknown. What we seek is knowledge of the unknown. What we seek to accept is that which is unacceptable, what we seek to achieve is what we have not achieved so far. So, what is so funny about learning more about pain? I think it is wise.

One thing is, people should not misunderstand what I said by looking for pain. You know, that has been the mistake that the old ascetics have made, trying to walk on fire and sleep on a bed of nails, and all that nonsense. What we need to develop is an attitude of acceptance of pain when it comes. Or to pray, you see, not for pain, that I should bear pain, but so that the pain of others may be relieved by my bearing it, because I am stronger.

It is like an old lady walking across the street with a lot of bags from the general stores, and you offer to carry her or her bags across. It's a pleasure to do it, not a pain. We don't say, "For heaven's sake, give me your pain, madam! Let me carry the bags across the street." That would be stupid. Rather, we put on a smile and say, "May I help you?" Isn't it? It is no longer a pain when you bear pain like that, the pain of others borne by us willingly. Accepting it as a gift is actually a pleasure. Then, when you are open to receiving that as a gift, you receive love as a gift. When the old lady says, "Thank you," and you see the sparkle or twinkle in her eyes and a renewal of faith that human beings are still human beings, that there are still young people who regard age and respect age.

You know, it is a modern phenomenon that the young have no respect for the old. There is too much pride and arrogance in youth. Especially in American society, they seem to worship youth as some sort of a God-bestowed quality. It is the age of craziness, arrogance, pride, stupidity, ignorance, wantonness, and any stupid youth who is worth the salt that he eats should pray to get out of that youthful state as early as he can. But your society is pampering the youth, worshipping youth. Everything in the Americas is stupidly orientated towards keeping you young and stupid. Excuse my saying it, but it is true. Where is the gracefulness of growing old, of ripening with age? You don't eat a raw mango or a raw banana, do you? So, why do you want raw youth?

There is an inversion of values in the Occidental cultures. If you see the wise cultures of the East, youth doesn't last very long. They mature very early. A boy of sixteen in India, if he continues to be a boy of sixteen, they would say, "What's happening to this boy? Is there something wrong with him?" They are supposed to be mature at sixteen, fifteen, fourteen, you see, to be able to shoulder the responsibilities of not only themselves, but of their families. In my father's times, people went to work at sixteen and supported families at sixteen. Here, at twenty-eight we are still working for degrees in colleges, and at thirty and at thirty-two, as if the search for knowledge is some sacred search. Knowledge is for the ignorant. One who seeks knowledge is, ipso facto, accepting the fact that he or she is ignorant.

So, let us learn to look at things in a different way. Youth is okay for youth, but let us try to get out of it, let us try to mature quickly. Let us try to become capable of handling responsibilities, first of our own selves, and later on of others — of the family, of the village, of society, of the world. I said somewhere that God is the infinite repository of pain. He doesn't need pleasure. God — what pleasure can He have? With whom? With what?

So, as we develop the capacity to receive and bear pain and transform it by some arcane mystic, divine process into the ultimate zenith of growth, we become progressively divinised, until he who has the capacity to bear the pain of the whole universe, you call him God. Mere women, with one or two children, are all the time wailing about the pains of their families, the children. "Oh, my dear child, he suffered so much and, you know, I suffered with him." Who asked you to suffer with him? You take his suffering so that he will no longer suffer.

Christ did not suffer with us; he suffered. And he appealed to his Father in Heaven, "Why are you forsaking me?", in the sense that, "I feel this pain. I shouldn't have to feel this pain. If I am what I claim to be, that I am the Son of God, I shouldn't feel this pain." I prefer to interpret his last cry like that. "Why have you forsaken me?" means, "Where is that power you gave me to bear pain? It seems to have vanished, at this moment when I need it most. I am exposed as a human being." But that is also the human-ness of the divinised person, as Babuji Maharaj said, that on the highest level of divinisation we must yet retain our humanity, our human qualities, human values, compassion, sympathy, love.

So, we should not become masochists and seek pain. "No, no, let me marry somebody who will beat me up every morning. Chariji, can you find such a boy for me within the Mission?" Well, if anybody wants to be beaten, I will do it willingly, you see, if it would contribute to your spiritual growth, but it doesn't. It only creates more hatred, more revulsion.

All that I was trying to say is, if it comes your way, accept it. Whether it be pleasure or pain, doesn't make any difference to us. Don't renounce pleasure under some funny idea that we are going to be saints who have no pleasure in life. Life is to be enjoyed. Enjoyment means both of pleasure and pain. The idea that only pleasure is to be enjoyed is a crazy Occidental idea. Pain is to be enjoyed. Any fool can enjoy pleasure. What capacity does it require to enjoy pleasure? I mean, the stupidest oaf enjoys pleasure. Give him a glass of beer and he is in the seventh heaven.

So you see, pleasure is the least common factor of humanity. Any stupid thing enjoys pleasure — animals, bees, birds — everything enjoys pleasure. How are you human just because you enjoy pleasure? If an ant were to turn around and say, "Oh, sweets. I, too, enjoy sweets. What's so wonderful about you?", what answer would you give? All that you can say is, "I consume a kilo, you consume one grain of sugar, but the thing is the same." The pleasure of mating — everything in the universe. What's so hot about human beings mating? Isn't it? It is something in which the whole creation participates.

Pain, yes. Now, come to the fact of life. It is pain, the capacity to bear pain, the ability to bear pain, the willingness to bear pain, that makes human beings of us. One who says, "Oh, it is painful," well, I suppose they will be reborn in some fashion, in a form of life where there is no suffering any more.

Amoeba, for instance. No childbearing, no pregnancy, no pain, just divide into two every time you feel like it. Or newts — cut them with the knife and they regenerate the lost parts. No pain.

So, the inability to bear pain means you are going down the scale of evolution into the insects, and forms of life where there is no nervous system, no pain, no pleasure, only existence. If you want to go to the highest levels of consciousness, it is inevitable that we have to be more and more sensitive. More and more acuity has to be developed. That is what must distinguish a real human being from a false human being. The false human being is one who has all the appearance of being human but is still at the level of the amoeba — doesn't want pain, doesn't want responsibility, is a leech on society, living off doles which a good government or a stupid government is willing to pay to its useless population. I consider that this social security business is a bane on civilization, is a bane of culture.

I have talked about this enough in Europe, that every stupid fool of a human being goes climbing mountains and goes right into the oceans for a holiday, because when they get sick or they break their legs, they get free treatment. If they had to pay for it, they wouldn't go. It makes us behave stupidly, behave childishly, seeking pleasure where there should be no pleasure. I cannot imagine climbing a mountain being a pleasurable activity, and falling from a cliff and breaking your leg and having your picture printed on the front page of a newspaper. Or this crazy invention — what do they call it? — hanging from a glider. Expensive equipment, expensive illnesses, state-borne.

So, your society is making fools of you, offering you the pleasure as a bait, depriving you of your humanity, removing what little spunk there was in you, so that a mere Indian, an ignorant stupid Indian, has to come and criticize you here. What a shame. What a fall there was, my countryman. You should weep for these things, not be proud of such a civilization, not be proud of a society where weakness is promoted, where indulgence is promoted. When are we going to wake up to the facts of life? Because we have been screened, insulated from pain. You don't even feel the cold of the environment — insulated houses, hot and cold water all the time. I wish some of you would throw away these insulating factors and live like our forefathers lived.

It's no use reading Emerson and that famous guy who wrote about that lake, you know, who was it? Thoreau. It's no use reading him and admiring him and saying, "This is the spirit of America." It doesn't exist any more. The spirit of America is dead. Today we have an American society which is indulgent towards itself, which is leeching off society, where four percent of the population is consuming forty-eight percent of the world's energy resources. Denigrating a world, not itself, and yet is a great country because it can destroy everything by the pressing of a red button.

So I say, "Americans, be aware of America. America, beware of Americans." We have to wake up. We have to realise that, as a global community, we have no right to deprive our brothers and sisters living elsewhere. We may not be able to contribute to their welfare, but we should not deprive them of what is their rightful due. You say, "Let not the right hand know what thy left hand has done." I would like to reverse it and say, "Let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. And if the right hand is not doing what it should do, cut the damn thing off." What is the secrecy in hiding? Of course, they spoke about charity, but I say vice. If my right hand is doing what is not good for me, I should have the ability to take a sword in my left hand and cut off this right hand of mine which is disgracing me, spoiling me, preventing my evolution.

There is a famous story of a great sculptor in Mysore who made a new idol for a temple. It was supposed to be one of the best idols ever made. On the day of consecration he heard something strange; he tapped it and there was a hollow sound. When he broke it, he found there was a toad inside. It's a very common thing — toads within the stones. And he took his sword and cut off his right arm. He said, "I don't deserve to do any more work. I could not select the proper stone for this consecration of an idol." This is the ultimate pain — the pain of failure. It is not the pain of bearing miseries that is the true pain. It is the pain of failure. That is what leads to the suicidal instincts. I am a misfit. I am a failure. And when you are self-indulgent and pleasure orientated and seeking fulfilment in the physical world, you are only going towards failure. Inevitably you are sliding down, like a car which is going downhill with no brakes.

So you see, the right appreciation of pain will act as some sort of a brake which will pull us up in time, before disaster overtakes us. Then at least we can reverse direction and say, "Okay, enough of this nonsense. Enough of this common factor of the universe. I am destined to be something uncommon, unique. If I am going to indulge in everything that a mere ant and a mere fly is indulging in, I am just an ant and a fly." They are also accumulating wealth, you know — squirrels, ants, bees — accumulating like crazy. And we come along and take the honeycomb and put it in a spinner and take the honey away. They don't need it. The law is that if you accumulate beyond your need, somebody else is going to take it away. And why are you accumulating for somebody else? It sounds crazy. Isn't it? If somebody came and occupied your house, you wouldn't allow them to do it. "It's my house." But you find a house with seventy-seven rooms and you don't even know which is your room and somebody is coming and living there, you wouldn't even know it.

It is time to take stock of our needs, forgetting wants. Sahaj Marg says, "Needs, yes. Wants, no." What do I need? It is my birthright that I seek for it. What is a want is to be thrown out. Pleasure? Find it in whatever happens to you. As Babuji said, when pain goes beyond its limit it is converted into pleasure. Pain and pleasure are the two sides of the same coin. Look for the one, you find the other. Therefore, we seek for pleasure and find pain. They seek for pain and find the pleasure in it. But not in this idea that, if I look for pain I'll find pleasure, because then it becomes a transaction all over again, a contract with God. "God, let me seek pain so that you will give me pleasure." God says, "Well, you are looking for pain for pleasure, so let me give the pain that is in that pleasure, because after all, what you are really seeking is pleasure again, not pain." So, you find the pain in it.

So, we cannot cheat God because we cannot cheat ourselves. If there was no Self in me, perhaps I could get away with cheating God. But that blighter is right here in me and He is me, so how can I cheat my Self? So my Self says, "You there. This is really what you want. Take it." That's why very often we find what psychologists are trying to explain futilely, that we really get something which our inner self wants, though our superficial self is trying to delude us into thinking that we want something else, its opposite.

This is the psychological truth, that we seek not what we overtly seek but what we covertly seek from inside. That is why men go to drink and drugs, to destroy themselves through pleasure. They don't have the courage to destroy themselves through pain. Even a suicide wants a nice suicide so that the body will be preserved. His face can be rouged and then given a haircut and embalmed nicely for posterity.

I know people who are afraid to fly over oceans. I was discussing this with somebody in Malaysia. "Oh, how can you fly over the Pacific? It's ten and a half hours over water and at any moment you could crash." I said, "You think it is better to crash over land! [laughter] In what way is it better?" There was no answer, because it is the crash that is difficult, not whether it crashes in water or on land. Isn't it?

So, when we seek pleasant circumstances for destruction we are fooling ourselves. There can be no pleasant circumstances for destruction. A rich man's death is as final as a poor man's death. "No, no, at least he died a rich man." Oh, did he? He died a human being. The richest are left behind. He left twenty-seven million. So what? He left five hundred and sixty million. So what? He didn't take it with him. What you cannot take with you is not yours.

Spiritual wisdom says, acquire that which you can take with you anywhere. The truth that it is possible is there in front of us, in the form of our samskaras. We have been carrying them with us in life after life. [laughs] And, if you can take samskaras in their *samsookshma* form, subtle form, why not the opposite? Why not the divine capacity, the divine qualities which are inherent in our nature, but which we have covered over with fear and ignorance?

So you see, often I believe the mystics of all countries, of all ages have not done us a real service, because they have not explained why we should seek these things. Why pain? We rebel, you see, and say, "Oh, stupid guy. Looking for pain. Must be crazy." That's the standard American criticism of everything they don't understand: "It's crazy." But then, when you think that they are the people who became saints and who became divinised, must be something to it. But we don't think like that.

Many people come to Sahaj Marg because here we say we have no do's and don'ts, no idea of vice and virtue, no opposites. They say, "Well, what a wonderful system. That's for me." But they don't understand that, when we say we don't think of these two extremes, it means both extremes don't exist for us. You should not seek for pleasure because you cannot seek for pain. You cannot say, "Wonderful. The Master doesn't judge." Perhaps not, but you have to judge yourself. The onus, the responsibility for judgement is cast upon you. Evaluate yourself.

The evening cleaning is precisely the spiritual equivalent of a rather mundane and gross confession in church. In church you are humiliating yourself when you say, "Oh my Lord, I did this and that," and the Father says, "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, I absolve you of your sins." He has no capacity to absolve you. All that happens is a muttered confession which makes you more ashamed of yourself. In the spiritual context it is put into a subtler form — no criticism of yourself, no confession — but the fact of the ability, the possibility to eradicate it by a process, remove it.

So you see, it is the way of preserving your self-respect, such as you have for yourself, and simultaneously undertaking a process of bettering yourself. Cleaning is not just to get rid of garbage. Cleaning is to make us lighter, lighter in the soul, lighter existence. Light in this form, light in the form of lightness, you see, zero gravity perhaps.

So, all these things we have to achieve. Without these things there is no achievement. As Babuji said, "I can put any fool in the point of liberation." But that is a gift, again. I am not against receiving gifts, especially from the Master. But he wants us to be mature enough to handle our problems ourselves, so that later on we will be mature enough to handle the problems of others. So that we will be mature enough to handle the problems of the whole world, perhaps.

There is no use seeking divinisation and expecting it to be a nice life, you know, fun and laughter. It doesn't exist. So, those of you who are looking for that sort of divinised life, where we can frolic around like the Roman gods and the Greek gods, taking away women from Earth... Greek mythology is full of such abductions and rape, and we say, "What a wonderful life that must have been. By Jove, I wish I were Jove himself!" Seek a Diana and seek, I don't know, nymphs and Aphrodites all over the place, frolic in the form of deer and fawn. It is an absurd mythology, an indulgent mythology, a vicious mythology, full of rape and abductions. How on earth anybody can venerate these mythologies and make gods and goddesses of them, I don't know.

How on earth did we become so decadent that we worship the Greeks and their mythologies and their ideas of human perfection and beauty and knowledge, when all that it was, was sensual rubbish. It is time we recognize what real philosophy should be, what growth-oriented philosophy should help us to do and become, and not be just drawn into these parodies and, what should I say, fraudulent philosophies dumped upon an unsuspecting and unwilling public. People who refuse to think, but just accept that such and such a person said such and such a thing, it must be great. How did he become great? The language, the beauty of language, beauty of the dialectical system of discussion.

No answers, but just question after question after question after question. And the famous dialogues stop somewhere, as if you are just being suspended from a rope and this string is cut. It's okay; beautiful language, but where does it get us? Beautiful train, but if it is not going somewhere it is no use to me. It is like a big jumbo Boeing 747-400 standing in the hanger — it cannot move. But there is a DC-10, or even a DC-3, one of the most humble aircraft, but supposed to be, even today, the safest aircraft in the air — the Dakota. If that is going and this is not going, but what is wisdom to seek that and not this? "No, no, I like jumbos." This is California culture incidentally — the biggest oranges, the biggest melons, the biggest of everything. Not the sweetest, not the tastiest; quality is lost for form and size.

So, any culture which focuses our attention on superficialities is suspect. Who is endangered by that culture? The people within that culture. After all, when there is an air raid warning you run like hell out of your houses into the bomb shelters. The house may be a two and a half million-dollar house but it's not safe, so you scurry underground like rats.

So, the wisdom is that we must have a safe environment, an environment which protects us, nourishes us, affords us the opportunity of growth, of evolution — not something which will take us to the grave in a pleasurable way. Therefore, the wisdom of accepting pain is all the more important, the ability must be cultivated urgently, the capacity must be developed immediately, if possible, because in the ability and the willingness to bear pain is hidden the possibility of transcending pain.

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PULL UP THE ANCHOR

Los Angeles, California, USA
12 December, 1990

I was remarking to my brother Bill that I am very happy to see the American group this time. Not that I was not happy before but, as Mark Anthony says, “It is not that I love Caesar less, but that I love Rome more.” Similarly, it was not that I liked less to see you before, but I like more to see you now. It is one of those real things, but which we cannot explain in language. It is like, I think it was the Frenchman Mr. Jacky who was talking of the beloved: If you are really in love you will love her more and more every day. Does it mean you love them less and less before? It doesn’t mean anything like that. So, more and more is possible without it having been less and less before. There are only a few things in spirituality and in love, and they are both the same.

So, I am very proud of my Master’s work upon all of you. He has proved that again it is possible that people will change, people must change, people can change. Of course, like a ship carries its own anchor with it, we also have our anchors, and if you don’t remember to pull it up, your ship cannot sail. We remain stuck. What is this anchor? It is our emotions, our attachments to our relatives, our attachments to our language, our culture, our tradition, our country. These are all anchors — too many anchors. A ship can sail only if the anchor is pulled up. "Up with anchors," says the captain. "Aye, aye," says the mate, and he calls out the order and it is wound up. Some of us even have sheet anchors. A sheet anchor is a large sheet of metal which has a track even more than the regular weighty anchor, and the sheet is composed of so many things, like two points on a plane, a plane surface.

I find that more and more people use their attachments as excuses, to blame those to whom we are attached, for our inability to let go. We have a famous example in Shriramdum, in south of India, in a temple, where a man was standing with two arms round a pillar waiting for *prasad*, like this [gestures]. When the prasad was dropped into his extended arms, he had either to let go the prasad and pull out away from the pillar or remain stuck there with the prasad, which he couldn't in any case eat. If the prasad had been hot perhaps he would have let go.

So, we remain stuck. It is like one of the Laurel and Hardy movies of my childhood, where I think it was Stan Laurel, always he is stuck to a pillar. He says, "The pillar is sticking on to me. Ask the pillar to let go." So, somebody has to let go. And, pillars being inanimate, idol worship, idols being inanimate, how can the idol let me go? I have to let go of the idol. It is a bit of stone and it doesn't know what to do with me. "No, no, you see, that *murti* is attracting me too much. Please tell the idol to let go of me, then I will follow Sahaj Marg." Yes, but how can the idol let you go? You have to let go of the idol. When you reach your destination you have to get out of the plane. The plane will not eject you. When you are finished with the toilet you get up and walk away. "Oh no, no, the toilet won't let go of me." These are all crazy things we do.

It's the same thing with family relationship. Blessed are they that will respect their families. More blessed are they who love them enough to give them the liberty which we need for our own spiritual progress. Most blessed are they who are not willing to do it themselves but permit others to do it. But we are always holding on. The husband doesn't like the wife going to meditation; the wife doesn't like the husband going for meditation. Mutual jealousies. And in this world of, you know, the male chauvinist pig — MCP. Why a male must always progress faster than the female? What crazy thoughts!

The wife is subservient enough to say, "No, no please, I don't want to progress faster than my husband." Why? "There will be problems. He'll feel jealous. He may stop me from coming altogether." But if you are earning more than him in your profession or your job, he likes it because you are making money for him. They encourage you to continue to work, to work more and more, to work two shifts if possible, but the difference must be little, not too much. If the husband earns sixty thousand and you earn half a million, again there is trouble. The male ego is hurt.

So you see, we have to put up with so many problems that it is amazing that there are so many people here today. It is truly amazing; it takes guts to do it. But this is not praise; I am only pointing a way that, without guts there is no survival in the spiritual world. The material world is a place of the tooth and the claw. Here it is a question of sheer guts, courage, persistence in the face of various taunts, trying to hold everything together. But, you know, when there is a shipwreck and everything is broken to pieces, you cling on to a spare spar or an oar or a bit of seine in the hope somebody will pull you out. When it really comes to a situation that it is me or not me, then you say, "Devil take the rest. I survive." But if you can do it right from the beginning, that all these worldly relationships are relationships for this world, they didn't exist before I was born, they will not exist after I die….

It is like a train. We are all going together to one destination — some people from France, some from Holland, some from Timbuktu — and because we are sitting there we become friendly. It's a long journey; it may even ripen into a relationship of love, yet inevitably at the destination we have to part. Addresses are exchanged, notebooks are lost in the process, but the moment the destination comes, you say, "Okay, Harry," or "Okay, Elaine," or "Okay, whatever it is." "See you. I'll call you. I'll call you." You know, I have heard this "I will call you," so many times, but nobody ever calls again because that moment is the moment of forgetfulness — "Passing through the river of forgetfulness," as they say in the old mythologies. When we go home, we say, "Oh, who was that guy I met? You know, so nice, such a nice fellow. We were sitting together, actually. I can't even remember his name," and you look around in your baggage for the book in which you wrote it. You can't find the book. Whether it is a Freudian slip that you don't want to remember it or whether it is a real forgetfulness, it only shows that, for the moment, for the nonce, we are in the grip of certain tendencies and emotions and feelings. We have to release it.

It is like the famous monkey who puts his paw inside a cookie jar and holds a cookie and can't withdraw his hand. Who is to give up? You. If you cannot give up, nothing is going to give you up. It will be like the gravity which holds us on to the surface of this planet. If I have to jump, I must overcome that gravity. I must jump with a velocity sufficient to take me out of the grip of this gravity — what they call escape velocity. If I can't do it I remain stuck. It is not the world's fault, it is not the fault of our relations; it is just that we lack the courage, the guts, or perhaps the conviction to let go of everything else and follow.

So, two things I have to pray for all of you: that you may develop the conviction first, without which you cannot develop the courage, and for those of you who have the conviction, that you may develop the necessary courage to do what is necessary.

I have one idea about it. There are Americans here. (I include the Canadians — like it or not, they are being part of the North American continent.) Babuji said that in materially advanced cultures spirituality will not grow so fast. It is not that we are not aware of the problem nor, I must say, was Babuji very keen about bringing Americans into Sahaj Marg, because we never thought of Americans and Canadians. In India we thought of human beings. We still think of human beings.

It is how to emancipate a human being from this foolishness of insulating himself or herself from something against which you cannot possibly be insulated. If the insulation works, well, it is either temporary or because it is not in your samskara to suffer, but it is still not going to help you to grow. That the American doesn't suffer because he has insulated himself is a crazy idea, because they are the most suffering that I see, notwithstanding all the insulation that they have got. So, what is the answer to that? They are insured, they are super-insured, they want everything made, but it is as rare as the dodo. A happy American is as rare as the dodo, as they say.

So, obviously there is something wrong with your insulationary procedures. Obviously it is very wrong, because it doesn't work. Your marriages are not holding together, your parental relationships are not holding together, your filial relationships are not holding together — nothing is holding together. All that is holding you is your television screen, to which you tightly refer. It has become a drug addiction in itself. I think people who have this thought should re-examine that thought carefully, and inspect whether this thought has value at all. Because, otherwise you are going to sit glued before what you Americans call very aptly 'the idiot box'. It is the idiot box. The box is not the idiot; the box is for idiots.

You know, the famous definition of the cigarette by, I think, Samuel Johnson: "It is a white cylindrical object filled with tobacco, with fire at one end and a fool at the other." Samuel Johnson was famous for his wit and his very precise definition of things. So, there is no use that, apart from all the other insulations, the American should also continue to insulate himself from thought which is not according to his convention or which he is not able to accept. That is the ultimate defeat of the American, you see, it will be the ultimate defeat of the American, that what he cannot do — he will not accept, even as a thought to ruminate over — to examine the possibilities of failure in this life, the greatest danger to Americans. What I said this morning, "America, beware of Americans; Americans, beware of this America," I repeat again.

Thank you.

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FREEDOM OF SPIRITUAL APPROACH

Los Angeles, California, USA
14 December, 1990

Well, I don't think I have anything left to say, except that there is one more marriage in the offing tomorrow morning to finish off this visit to Los Angeles. There's one thing I would like to say, that I don't intend to make many more preceptors in the future years, because I was rather frightened to see that, with six more, I would have made five hundred preceptors after Babuji Maharaj passed away, and that's a great deal.

Perhaps after those six then, we pause for a couple of years, because we have to allow preceptors to learn how to work and, at the moment, preceptors are only serving the existing abhyasis. There should be a perceptible growth before any more preceptors are added, because you don't just need preceptors, we need them only if there is work for them. That should be borne in mind.

As I laughingly said this morning, we have two new preceptors. Please use them, because preceptors cannot have work unless you go and make them work. They are people who are supposed to serve us. Too often we have this notion that a preceptor is sort of a mini-guru. I mean, the abhyasi has this notion, which is very wrong. There are no mini-gurus, there are not gurus, there are only people who are here to serve. Preceptors are meant to serve abhyasis, and abhyasis should not hesitate in asking for this service.

There is too often this idea of etiquette, the nicety of behaviour, but a thirsty man doesn't bother where his water comes from, nor a hungry man where his food comes from. So, when you are in need, please approach the preceptor and demand this service. They are committed to giving it to you. If you have too much consideration for them they have less and less consideration for us. It is like a storekeeper, you know, if you are too polite the storekeeper thinks you are a fool. It doesn't mean we have to be rude, but we must extract the service that we are entitled to from preceptors. That is number one.

Number two is, there is a perceptible growth, a change of, or an improvement in the quality of abhyasis in this area. I wish to see it again in Atlanta, where we are going tomorrow, and more than anything else I wish to see it continue to improve. A stagnant abhyasi is a stagnant abhyasi — brings no joy to either himself or herself or to anybody else. We must progress... [gap in tape] Things must move, and when I say things must move, I mean we too must move. Our condition must change every second; then only can we say we are abhyasis who are progressing, we are human beings. There is no use just talking about animal man, to man man, to divine man, and all this blah, blah from the books. We want to see all that **achieved**. There is no use in just praising Babuji and Lalaji. We must be living testaments to their efficacy, their method, their love for us. Otherwise, you are only preaching without practising.

This morning one of the gentleman here, who was dressed up as a swamiji, and Wendy's husband, asked me whether it is right to judge a guru by his disciples. I was a bit cautious in answering that question. Though I did agree that it is a fact that you judge a tree by its fruit, I had to be cautious, because nowadays these truths don't seem to hold. Today's children don't resemble their parents. Genetically, yes, because they have no choice, but in other ways, there's always this trend and this tendency to run away from tradition, from heritage, from culture, and California is too well known for this tendency.

All change is not necessarily good. And when the change is just for the heck of it, and if that change is undertaken in the spirit of bravado or show-off-ness, or just to prove that California is the state of change, then it is all going into some crazy spin. Aviators know that it is very difficult to come out of a spin, unless you are a very qualified pilot. You must be a master to come out of a spin. So, let us not get into spins. So, we follow a linear path, not going round and round like this.

Please remember that we are not here for any gimmicks, not here for any kicks, not here for any experiences — good, bad, or indifferent. We are here for progress, for evolution. If you seek anything else, even as an adjunct or an accessory to the progress, we are in some way, in some measure diluting the value of spiritual practise. Preceptors must remember this, abhyasis must be cautious about this, that they are not sent away with shoddy treatment, shoddy service, half-hearted service.

It is a matter of regret for me that, ever since I joined my Master, I have always heard that the sittings with the Master are better than with the preceptors. It has been something of a shame, you see. It should not be so. The mango is the same in the basket. If you take it and give it, it tastes sweeter. If she gives it, it is not so sweet.. That becomes something very subjective. It is unfortunately true, which is what makes me really sad, because if the preceptors did put their heart into the work, every sitting should be like the Master's sitting.

This is not a criticism of the preceptor's work. It is only a request that when you sit, you should transmit like him. How is it possible? The secret is given. Imagine the Master is there. It is not such a big difficulty or difficult technique. It is not as if we have to buy a false beard and put it on before we sit down to meditate every time. You just — it is an act of thought, of will, that, "I am here; now I seat him in my place." It is an act of humility. It is an act of faith. Also, it is an act of the utmost belief in him that, at my call, he will come and do the work which he has assigned to me. Without these things, we cannot under any circumstances make the Master come here.

If a preceptor is able to sit and, by just an act of faith, say, "Babuji, please come and sit here and do this work," not in so many words, but it's one instant of thought, and he comes, what does it prove? That he is everywhere, that he is at our service, that he is condescending enough to come and serve us at our call. He doesn't make conditions, makes no stipulations, doesn't set times, doesn't set limits. Such a Master we have, and such a Master we must be willing to use. Then we can see the infallibility, the total efficacy of this system. But if you think you are the preceptor, and "What can I do, you see? I have a headache, the milk is boiling, and the cat is sitting outside meowing."

We have too many pulls, and the American way of life is too demanding. Not that the demand comes from outside, but because we let them permeate into our consciousness and become demands. And, we are thinking all the time of what others will think; they don't even have to say, they don't even have to criticize! "Oh, suppose I come for satsangh, Chariji. I don't know what my husband will say." Well, let him **say** it first, **then** we start thinking about it! Why do you injure that poor husband of yours by thinking in advance of what he is perhaps likely to say? That only shows your lack of confidence, not only in the system and in yourself, but even in your husband or your wife, as the case may be.

I have known wives who are here, whose husbands to my knowledge have not protested once, but this seems to build up in an explosive way, you see, that because he has not said anything yet, when he next opens his mouth it will be with explosive force. All assumptions, and all out of fear that one day I am going to be left to circulate, land for divorce. But it doesn't mean everybody is going divorce everybody else, or that everybody is going to die in a road accident, or everybody is going to get AIDS, or everybody is going to be bitten by a rattlesnake. They do exist, but not necessarily for us.

So, where is the necessary courage, bravery, faith, even between ourselves? Husband and wife relationship is supposed to be one of love and giving and forgiving. "No, no, I cannot possibly ask him. I know he would not like it." How do you know? How do you know that he will not like it?

We have too many fears, which only reflects our own lack of conviction in what we are doing, and the more we are unconvinced about what we are doing, naturally this lack of conviction is resulted in everything around us. They see the lack of conviction in us and they say, "Why are you going there if you are not really convinced about it?" This is what they say when they say, "Don't go." If you are convinced, nothing on earth can stop. Nature will help. Babuji Maharaj has said very clearly, "If you have the necessary will power to do what is right, every force of Nature will support that endeavour." He said it oh-so-clearly. And for preceptors, that is a promise when he said, "I am working for Nature and anybody who supports me in my work, Nature will support."

With all these statements of the Master, his promises to us, his own example to us, we have all read in his autobiography that his own father was against the whole thing, and would not allow him to visit Lalaji more than a few times in his lifetime. That didn't stop him.

It is like a brake in the car — only when you push the pedal it brakes. "Oh no, no, please remove the brake," you tell the new car dealer. "No, no, Madame. It is for your safety." "No, no, please remove it. Suppose it brakes by itself?" How can anything brake by itself? This is the logic of all opposition. We initiate the opposition consciously or unconsciously in some way, without our knowing it. Naturally it comes from outside. It is a well-known truth that if you see a dog on the street and you are a little afraid and you try to slink away, the same dog will instantly bark at you. If you are afraid of a policeman and you see him there and you are quietly turning around, he will blow his whistle, "Hey!"

So, please remember that every opposition that you may face or have faced is in some way initiated by you. Find out why it is being done. Find out how you can stop initiating this process, and you will find there is no more opposition. We don't have to bribe our relations or tell them lies, but we have to behave in a way which shows our conviction in the truth and in the rightness of what we are doing, where there can be no objection any more from any source. This is something you have got to all understand, realise, and put into effect. Test it for yourselves.

Everybody has these problems. Nothing is unique. Nobody's life is unique, nobody's husband is unique, nobody's wife is unique. Human beings are as similar as dollar bills — only the number changes. A white husband or a black husband, they are still men; otherwise you wouldn't be marrying them. A tall one or a fat one or a thin one is still a man or a woman, otherwise you wouldn't be marrying them. If the big, tall, white, handsome fellow was not a man but something else, some hitherto unknown species, a gorilla, for instance, you wouldn't be marrying it just because it's handsome, and tall and big. It has to be a man before you will marry him. The same thing with a woman.

So, it is the woman-ness in the woman, that the man in the man seeks, and it is the man in the man that the woman in the woman seeks. Given these two parameters, and knowing that they are eternally the same, unalterable, basic entities, characters, what is alterable is only behaviours. We all know, we don't have to be psychologists to understand, that behaviour depends on two. If there is only one, there is no question of behaviour at all. Why cannot God behave? Because He is only one. With whom will He behave and what will He do? The moment that our truth is this interplay, you know, of initiation and response, shall we say, then it becomes a game.

Most of these situations within the marital bond, within the family bond, start off as plays: "No, no, you should not go." If you just shrug and take it as a joke and walk out, he is not going to murder you. But we start hardening, "No, no, why cannot I go?" I may not sleep, my marriage is breaking up. And it escalates. Now it becomes a matter of self-respect, of prestige. "Who the hell does she think she is?", and she says, "Who the hell does this bastard think he is?" And you are sent into the stream, as it were, something which you cannot now stop, what you cannot overcome, laugh at, smile at. Weaken resistance by smiling, not by opposition, not by argument.

If you can get away with a request to take a sitting from me, then I tell you I am also very tough. But every person here has taken sitting from me, as if I am a tree and you just have to pluck the fruit from it — no resistance. Why can't you do it with the people you love, with whom you are living day in and day out? I mean, it is crazy, and don't just tell me that's because you are willing. Well, if I am willing with you, who mean nothing to me in a real sense, why should not your people be willing, who mean everything to you and to whom you mean everything? So, there is something wrong somewhere, and the men better understand this as much as the women here, because both are at fault.

I would suggest that, if in the spiritual adventure anyone contributes to failure, that is a sin, it is a crime. It is like putting a child in a three-foot box of steel so that it shall not grow taller. "No, no, I like my child the way it is, my baby, my darling. Cuddly, handsome, no problems, no opposition, no will." So, you put him in chains, make the walls so tight that he cannot sit down even, put a roof over his head of steel, and watch the child die.

In any endeavour in which the heart of a person is there, if anyone chooses to interfere with that, there is bound to be a disastrous conclusion — I mean, if the heart is really set on it and if it is vital to your existence. So, husbands beware and wives also beware, of how you toil and toy with your husbands. You know, they are convinced this is right. Even if you are an idol worshipper, let him go his way. Par contra, if the husband knows his wife is bent on this thing, that there is nothing wrong in it, that it is an evolutionary way, and you still wish to go your church or to your, I don't know, ghetto, let her do her thing; you do your thing. There must be this freedom, this respect for individual aspiration. It is not a whim, it is not something of a game; it is an aspiration with which each one of us should not toy.

I know every one of you here has problems, even when both of you are abhyasis here. I know there are couples here who have problems with each other. I know there are potential couples here, where they are not getting married, because they can live together as abhyasis but not as married couples when Sahaj Marg is between them.

So, this is a very serious warning I wish to give you that, more than any other deprivation, the spiritual deprivation of your partner could be a disastrous culmination to your life. Disastrous certainly in the spiritual sense, because it is a betrayal of your trust, of your faith, of your love, to condemn somebody to an existence in a material sphere when that soul is aspiring to become something else. It is like locking a bird in a cage, and it is a shame, it is a sin, and it is a curse on today's society.

I wish you all to understand this very clearly. I have not spoken before in such forthright terms because I have always been afraid of being accused that I am breaking up couples. I joked this morning that I would rather be a priest who married people. I am not here for divorce. I am not here to promote divorce. I am not here to even initiate divorce. I am not here to even condone divorce. To me it is something reprehensible, though it is a fact of life. If it happens, it happens because one partner to the marriage is often a beast, a slave-driver, a slave-keeper, however gentlemanly outwardly they may be polished, suave, well-dressed, apparently cultured.

But I think it has come time to speak, and at least within our brotherhood, we should not have these enslaving tendencies, where one has the freedom and right, the other has nothing. It is a violation of spiritual law, of freedom, and the only lawbreakers are not the ones who speed on the highways, or get drunk and drive. This is the greater violation of the divine law, that thou shalt not restrict another's freedom of spiritual approach.

So, for heaven's sake, get into the right understanding, co-operate with each other, fly like not one bird on two wings, but two birds on each one's two wings. And try to soar together, not one at the cost of the other, or not one keeping the other on the ground because you are earthbound. Then we shall see how magnificently we shall multiply.

You see, it is not pain which has prevented our little groups from growing. Whatever I may say of pain will not stop anybody from growing, because people are prepared for the pain. Everyone here is facing some pain or the other in coming here. It is the fact of not being able to come, either because of family, because of church, because of the almighty dollar, anything else.

So, I have to repeat what Babuji Maharaj said: "We of the Eastern nations, poor we may be, uncultured we may be, striving for our food and struggling for it we may be, but we have that freedom which in rest of the world you don't find today. The freedom to seek and approach and eventually identify with God." May Master bless you with such a freedom.

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HE IS IN YOU

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA
16 December, 1990

Brother Bill Waycott said something which I would like to expand. The idea of what is useful and what is successful, or to put it another way, what is efficient and what is talked about a lot. Today in life we don't necessarily buy the best, we buy the most expensive. People who buy the most expensive may not agree, they would say, "No, no, it is the best, therefore we pay money for it." In America, I think, like in California, we go for the biggest, the most expensive, the most glamorous, the most glittering. But in spirituality we try to reach down into what is effective for life's purpose, and not what sounds good or what looks good.

We have this triumvirate of divinity in India: of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. People don't understand that these forms are themselves descended from the ultimate Truth, we call it the *Para* in Sanskrit. Then the true worship of God should be with the ultimate, nameless, formless, and when they come down as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, it is again a purposeful thing. Not an evolutionary approach to God, but a purposeful approach to God — seeking. Seeking long life, seeking wealth, seeking satisfaction, seeking success, even knowledge.

So, when we come down from the highest there is always this fall into grossness. There is this fall from **becoming** something to **having** something. Friendship, too, today has deteriorated. It is very sad. All these clubs and associations that we have are only for mutual support of the members themselves but exclude those who are not members. Rotarian will help Rotarian, the Lion will help the Lion, Rosicrucian will help the Rosicrucian. Unfortunately, this has come into religions too — the Hindu helping the Hindu and cutting noses, the Moslem fighting the Hindu, Christians fighting everybody else.

Then you get the politics and power factors that we may be Christians but we fight each other so long as we are not equals. If you have oil and I want it, everything I do is right. I mean, all the problems in the Middle East are because they have oil. It is like a beautiful woman going on the streets and walking around at night — she is afraid of every damn fool who is walking on the streets. She can be mugged, she can be raped, her beauty becomes a curse. The wealth and riches of the wealthy man is a curse. That is why they protect themselves with compound walls, burglar alarms, dogs, lawyers, attorneys, but they forget the ultimate protection of God. When all these things fail, the rich man comes to helplessness, the beautiful woman comes to despair, and they say, “Why did you curse me with this? Why did I ask for beauty? Why did I ask for wealth?” It takes a long time. The arrogant associate with power, with wealth, with position, with beauty. It is something very difficult to overcome. It is an enormous arrogance. It is not really pride, it is an enormous arrogance. Those who are wiser should have pity for them, not admiration for them.

There is a story about Lord Krishna, or put another way, about Lord Narada, who was going around to visit his disciples on earth. Narada went with the first disciple, who happened to come by and said, "Can I accompany you?" Narada said, "Yes, of course." The first one they went to visit was a great emperor. Lord Krishna had to wait two hours at the gate because the emperor was busy; probably he had his committee meetings, his cabinet meetings, his finance ministers. The Lord could wait. "Lord is there forever, you see, what is the hurry? He is not going to run away somewhere, but my finance minister may not be able in the afternoon, my finance minister is going to Baghdad. God can always wait." So, Lord Krishna waited in the sun. Eventually the secretary came, greeting him in a very, what should I say, casual way. "Yes, what can I do for you, Lord Krishna?" You find this in many rich homes. The welcome you receive is not of the heart, it is from the head. Krishna silently blessed him that he should become even greater, emperor of more and more territory, more and more lands, more powerful, greater armies, greater wealth. Narada was puzzled, and said, "This fellow is so arrogant. He makes the Lord wait for two hours, and receives him as if he is just a friend or perhaps has come to beg from him, and yet Krishna blesses him!" In this way they went, you know, more and more puzzling for Narada, Krishna smiling more and more broadly. Krishna was always smiling.

Eventually, they rang up at a cowherd's place in the evening at sunset. This cowherd had one cow that was his sole wealth. He had taken the milk from the cow and was going to drink it. That was his evening meal. Lord Krishna came, and he immediately offered it to Krishna. Krishna drank it. The cowherd had to go hungry that night. And, not being satisfied with taking away his food, Krishna cursed that the cow may die. Narada was very puzzled.

On the way back he said, "Lord, every one of your meetings has confused me more and more." Krishna smiled at him and said, "Narada, you are supposed to be the *triloka sanchari*, you are moving through the seven *lokhas* all the time. How is it that you don't understand?" He said, "Lord, if I understood, I wouldn't ask you that question." Krishna said, "Well, start with the first question."

He said, "That emperor, you know, stupid fellow, arrogant and proud by merely worldly success, not understanding that this world is yours, you are the Lord of this universe. He is only holding a particular piece of land which he calls his empire. He was arrogant. He made you wait. He didn't greet you properly. Yet you blessed him with more and more territory, more and more empire, more and more power, more and more wealth. What is this *maya* business?"

The Lord said, "You know, I want him to come to me quickly. Even though he is so drunk with power that he falls giddy and senseless into the pit by the roadside like a drunkard. They generally don't wake up until their liver is going or they have to be fished out by another from the trenches. They are so ashamed that they have to become now men of character, give up drinking."

Narada said, "This is a lesson to me." He went on asking questions and said, "Lord, one last question. This poor cowherd, what has he done to you that you don't like him?" "No, no, I like him very much. He is one of the most devoted abhyasis, my devotee." "No, no, but your behaviour doesn't tally with what you say." Krishna said, "Who is Narada that you can criticize me?" "But Lord, you took away his milk. Okay, one evening's food, but you blessed that the cow should die. Is this becoming of you, the Almighty Lord, Master of Creation?" Krishna smiled and said, "Narada, you have indeed much to learn. You know, that cow is the thing which is standing between him and me. He is so attached to that cow. Until that cow is gone he will never come towards me."

So, the rich man must understand that God is giving them more and more because, until they are at the peak of their, shall we say, desires, ambitions, power madness, they will not turn towards God. And from the beggar, He has to take away his beggary; his begging bowl perhaps has to be smashed, because he thinks he can beg without the Lord's mercy.

The lesson of the story is that God gives to those whom He has to give to change them, and the Lord takes away from those from whom, without taking away, He cannot change them. It is a lesson to both. Let not the rich man think he is earning by his own will power or wisdom, his intelligence and his greatness in managing finances. Let not the beggar think he can beg even one paise without the Lord's grace and mercy. The Lord blesses all, some by giving, some by depriving. The God cannot be judged by His actions. "No, no, why does He give that stupid fellow, you see, who is already owning twenty-seven industries and is a billionaire, more money, and I want a dollar a day and don't get it?" We have no right to ask this question. Nor can the rich man say, "The stupid beggar, if for three days he does not get something on the streets, he will come and work for me for thirty cents an hour." We have no right to ask this question.

Truth of the matter is that God is merciful. He loves us whether we are rich or poor, ugly or beautiful, prostitutes or saints — doesn't matter to him. He has his own way of pulling us towards Himself because we are his children — this is the spiritual message. "You are my children. Come." "No, no, papa is dirty." "It doesn't matter. I have my bathroom ready for you." "No. I don't need you." "Yes, my son, but without me you wouldn't even have been born. So come back." "I am the first wife who left you." "Doesn't matter my darling, I did marry you once. You are also welcome." And the prostitute who ran away from you. "Do you not know that I am in the heart of every man who comes and makes use of your body? Without me you could not even be a prostitute. You also come back."

So, until we are able to develop this humility and ascribe our success in beggary as much as in industry, in brothelkeeping as much as in motel-keeping, in industries as well as in, I don't know, laziness. Unless we understand this truth that God is behind everything that we do, He is the cause of everything I do, he is the head of everything that we do, and that in the Divine view there is no difference between a rich man and a poor man. On the contrary, the poor, they are born welcome.

My Master once told me a story which set us all laughing to tears. One poor man went to heaven and there was a big line-up, a million people waiting to enter into heaven. There was one grouchy fellow — there always is one — he was watching and saying, "You know, even here you have to wait. What about the liars and beggars? Why don't they let us all in? After all, we have suffered so much." At that moment a limousine drove up, carrying a multi-millionaire. Instantly there was hectic activity at the gate, telephones jingling, gates opening. The red carpet was rolled out and this multi-millionaire from India was sent into Heaven. This grouchy fellow eventually waited another nine hours until the sunset. He reached God's presence at about nine PM after waiting the whole day. Instantly he said, "God, I have one complaint." God said, "Complaint, my son, in heaven, in my home? How is it possible? You have come here after a thousand lives on earth, you see, after so much pain and suffering. You still have something to complain about?" He said, "Yes, Lord. I have to bring it to your notice that here too there is corruption, here too there is nepotism." He said, "My son, I am astonished to hear this. Please explain." He said, "Lord almighty, I was waiting in this queue from morning six till evening nine. I have just come into your divine presence. But you know what happened while I was waiting? About three o'clock in the afternoon, some guy pulled up in a huge limousine, there was flurried activity, telephones, gates, watchman disbanded, red carpet rolled out and, limousine and all, he was rushed into your presence!" "Oh," God said, "You are referring to that person but don't you think it's justified?" He said, "My Lord, how can it be justified?" God replied, "You know, that was one of the few rich men who came to me. Such a man comes to me once in a hundred thousand years. Don't you think he deserves a red carpet? People like you are coming to me in droves every day."

So you see, this is the logic of heaven. We must understand this with our hearts. This is a laughable story, but it is not a laughing matter. Rich or poor, make sure you get there. Beautiful or ugly, make sure you get there. Be sure that neither your riches nor your poverty disqualifies you to get there. Make sure God is not going to be attracted by your beauty or repelled by your ugliness. The strong and the weak, both are welcome. All because we are His children. Arrogance is here, pride is here, achievement is here.

Spirituality says, don't mind about wealth or poverty. There is no harm, but set aside greed, pride, and arrogance. "You are a beggar. No harm, you see, I too have begged," God says. "I have begged from every one that I see. Why don't you think of me a little? Why don't you, before eating, offer that food to me? One grain of rice." God has to take this; God is the ultimate beggar. He is the ultimate giver, He is the ultimate beggar. He has to be both, otherwise He couldn't be either. All He says is, "If you are a beggar, know that even for that I am responsible. In you I beg, you are within the heart of the beggar, I am the reality of the beggar begging. Set aside the shame that you feel for being a beggar. Then you will realise Me."

So, brothers and sisters, my Master's message in a very condensed form: Be whatever you are here. It does not matter. Try to be even better, because human qualities are given to us to be expressed, to be used, not for ourselves but for the benefit of humanity. It doesn't matter whether you spend five rupees or five crores of rupees — it must be justified. It doesn't matter whether you earned five rupees or five crores. Make sure that what you are bound to keep, the rest must flow like water in a river. You have no right to dam up a river; you have right to use the river as much as you like. The moment you dam the river you are sinning against humanity. What is the sin? That you are denying to the other children of God what is their birthright, too.

All this nonsense today, about environment and pollution and keeping the world fit for our children, is a decadent idea born out of a civilization which is just waking up to its responsibilities. This should have been thought of thousands of years ago! One should not think of rape and its consequences after the rape has been effected. This is what we are doing, you see. The earth can be raped, the world has been raped, and now we are thinking of conservation, not polluting our rivers, and the high and mighty nations of the world look down their noses on the less developed nations and say, "You are polluting the earth." It is like a rich man who doesn't want a cow around his house because of the cow dung, but he forgets he gets his milk from that cow.

Let us not be wise after the fact. Post-fact intelligence is very easy. To be repentant after sinning is very easy, but we should repent before we sin and say, "Lord, prevent me from this. I am a human being. I have senses that you have stupidly given to me." It is right to blame God for these things. I don't see why not. He was even more stupid giving us intelligence, because with our intelligence we go haywire, we go crazy, we become arrogant, we become accusative, more and more homes, more and more industries, more and more cars, and we think we are God Almighty on earth. Hinduism is not a religion which preaches brimstone and fire and pitch, but it does not exclude the fact that God does come again and again to correct the *adharma*. It is written somewhere here. It is not enough to write on the walls of your temples, it is necessary to practise it.

It is necessary to make sure that God in my heart is my friend, He is my soul, the soul of my soul, He is me. But the moment He comes out of me, He can be my destroyer. It is like my urine, my excreta, my vomit, you see. As long as they are inside you, you don't feel the stink. You don't say they are untouchable, you don't say they are nasty, dirty, lousy things. It is in my stomach; how can it be dirty? But the moment you put it in the toilet it becomes dirty, filthy, smelly, stinky, so bathrooms are more purified, more perfumed than even living rooms today. Quick flush, you know, perfect bathrooms, no odour. But we forget that dam is here, right here.

So, we must realise the wisdom of the fact that these may be there, you see, or may not be there, it doesn't matter, but that which is here when He comes out — beware.

It is like the old story of Prahlada. Here was an arrogant emperor, Hiranyakaship. "I am God," he said. But his son Prahlada said, "No, Papa, it cannot be. But there is God, beyond all of us." "No, no, I am God. Say I am God." "No, I can only say Narayana." That poor boy was put through all the travails. The emperor tried to kill him, put him under the wheels of a chariot, threw him down from a mountaintop, threw him into the ocean. Everything that he could do he did, but he couldn't kill that boy. Finally, in a fit of anger he says, "Where is this Narayana? I wish to see him." And the boy says, "He is everywhere, Daddy. How can you ask such a silly question? He is everywhere." The father asked, "Oh, in this pillar?" Prahlada says, "Yes." And the father kicks the pillar. He didn't hurt his foot. He lost his life.

The moral of the story is, don't think you can drink in a bar without anybody seeing you, because He sees. Don't you think you can have fun in a motel with a girl who is not your wife, away from society's dirty mind, out of sight. Nobody else may see you, but He sees. Don't think you can make money by crooked means without anybody seeing it, not even accountants knowing it. He is seeing it. And what He is seeing you cannot forget. He will forget but you cannot forget. Even for Him you cannot forgive yourself. This is what penitence is about; this is what guilt is about. Otherwise, we should be walking this earth as if we were lords of this earth.

Why are we ashamed to walk this earth with our head held proud, high? Because this blighter sitting here says beware. You set out walking — beware, beware, beware. You set out jogging — beware, beware, beware. Therefore, we have all the drugs, all the air-conditioned rooms, the Dunhill pillow mattresses, the sofas, all the beautiful statuary in our houses, to lull us into a sense of security that with all these, He cannot come anywhere near me. But that fellow is here.

You know that famous story of, what was that boy's name, Parikshit, the emperor Abhimanyu's son. It would do well for Hindus at least to learn these stories. He was cursed that he would be bitten by a serpent and would die. He goes upon a mission. It is said that the rishi was doing *tapasya*, and Parikshit was a young prince. In his arrogance, he took a dead snake and put it round the rishi's neck like a garland. When the rishi eventually came out of meditation, he cursed whoever was responsible: "May he die of snake bite." Parikshit built a palace right in the ocean, far away where none could enter. But his dying came. Vegetables had to come from outside, bread and butter presumably, you see, bagels perhaps! And in one of those *nimbu* [limes] that they bring, you know, for lime juice, there was a tiny worm which nobody noticed. This fruit was brought into the august presence of his majesty. It was cut open, the worm came out. It assumed its full form as the snake Daksha and finished him.

So, the moral is God is everywhere, God is in me too. I can be happy and contented when He and I are in harmonious relationship. He does not care what you are. You can be a computer specialist, you can be a general in the army, you can be the most beautiful doctor on earth, you can be anything. You can be a beggar, you can be a prostitute. Forgive me for saying it, but there is nothing wrong with prostitution, because it is the men who are responsible for it. Swami Vivekananda said, “Don’t look upon your fallen sisters with revulsion, because were they not here, you and you and you would be in their place.” So, every honest woman in a honest household owes something of her marriage and the sacred security of her marriage to a prostitute in town.

Revile not. This is the ultimate justice, that I owe everything to everybody around me, not only to God. God is in every one of you, in every one of your hearts. So, let me give to each what is due. Give unto Harod what is Harod’s. Give the taxman what you have to pay him. You can read and write without accountants and attorneys.

Spirituality says, learn this idea of pain inwards, get into a relationship with this blighter who is inside you, whom you call God, who is the Lord of the Hindu dharma.

Incidentally, the word ‘Hindu’ is wrong, you see, there is no such thing as Hindu. Hindu is a corruption from Farsi and Slavic influences using the word ‘Hindu’ to become Hindus. The true word is *sanatana dharma*, which means the eternal dharma. Dharma is that which upholds, from the Sanskrit root, *dhru*. And all that can support, is supportive, is dharma and that which can endlessly support is sanatana dharma. He is the ultimate supporter, the endless supporter, the eternal supporter, so He is the object, the subject of eternal dharma, which is sanatana dharma.

So, if we have the association with Him and we are guided by Him… Then we have these divine examples of great men, wise men. The whole pantheon of rishis have been full of such great figures. They may not have been successful but they are objective. Success is personal, effectiveness is social. A successful man is successful only for himself. An effective person is effective for all, for whoever may come into his orbit. So, we should seek to become effective, not successful. In becoming effective, if you are also successful, well, it is two birds killed with one stone. If it can also be a divine activity, in which you are successful and effective, it becomes three birds with one stone. A successful man lives only for himself, with one stone, one bird.

So, let us learn to understand that spirituality is not at your choice. I am often told by people, "No, no, I don't require spirituality. I am too busy, you see, my affairs keep me busy, my business keeps me busy." We have no choice. It is as if I am a slave of circumstance; suddenly I have no time even to breathe. I would tell him, "Please stop breathing for three minutes and let us see whether you are here." "I have no time even to eat." Well, perhaps you can stop eating for a few days but not breathing. Great men have vowed that you can live without food for practically limitless days. You cannot live without water for more than a few days. You cannot live without breathing for even a few seconds or a few minutes: You cannot live without God at all.

That is the culminating message of my Master, the truth about religion, the truth about life — that we have no choice. He is inside me.

(Talk given at the Hindu Centre.)

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CHOOSE THE INNER

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA
16 December, 1990

I think what Bill has been trying to say is, we should have, I mean, this is my way of thinking, seriousness of attitude and seriousness of purpose. I would like to distinguish between these two, and they don't necessarily go together. What we need is seriousness of purpose. A superficial attitude may be necessary, it doesn't matter. Especially with the Americans, I find that externally they are very flippant. I think they are trying to hide an inner shyness. They are not very good communicators, the Americans. That's why I think your telephone system has developed so magnificently. You are not able to communicate face to face, but it is easy for you to speak on the telephone. I have always seen that even mothers and daughters can speak for an hour on the phone, and both are weeping at both ends, but when they get together it is all tooth and claw and nail.

So, what we need to develop is seriousness of purpose, and to get on with the job of spiritual progress. Otherwise, I think we'll have the danger, you know, of just externalizing our seriousness and attitudes, and sitting with solemn faces, with no toys, no fun, no chocolates, no popcorn, no spirituality. We need all these things. I think it is a sort of a cover up for our inner seriousness. What I would like you all to remember is that we are here for a purpose.

Not everything that we do is necessarily because we are tempted to do it. This is one fallacy that I find everywhere. Somebody's playing football, I stand and watch there. "Oh, Chari, you like football?" "Not necessarily, you see." Nothing to do, so I stand there and watch football. I might as well as be watching somebody raking cow dung into a can. This is there to see for the moment and that is there to see for that moment. Somebody gives me a chocolate, I eat it. "Oh, Chari likes chocolate," and when I go to Augerans my room is full of chocolates. Then, when they see that, they say, "Oh, he must be really liking it! So much of the stuff lying around."

So, in this way there is a danger of myths being created. We forget the man and myth remains. That is why we have mythologists, and then people like Joseph Campbell writing volumes about mythologies. We should not go from reality to myths, but from myths to reality. There is a great fascination with mythologies in the West. The psychology of mythology, the mythology of psychology. Apes, books. I like Joseph Campbell myself, not because he is very profound, or an original thinker, but because I like to read, you see. Again, that is another fallacy that I am growing wiser by reading. Sometimes I read not to become too wise. It is a danger.

My Master was not wise by any means, but he got what he required at that moment, as I said, from above. So, for knowledge and wisdom we have to depend there. For entertainment and such pleasure as we can get, into such pleasure as we can get, I go to Joseph Campbell and Karl Gustav Jung and people like that. I don't mean to denigrate the value of their teaching, but for me they are not teachers. In a certain sense, you know, I like what they write. It's like I like muffins, sometimes. Some Americans are very amused and some very annoyed when I don't like the bagel, for instance. I don't know what is so wonderful about a bagel. I don't like it. A bagel is a bagel.

So, we have to take all these, as they say in English, with a pinch of salt. Profoundness must be in the internal Self. Like they say, "Still waters run deep." Superficial riff and raffles and ripples, they may sound nice to poets, the bubbling brook, but it hardly contains three inches of water, lots of pebbles and some water flowing over it and you have a bubbling brook. We should seek the depths of profundity, and that is not necessarily exhibited in a profound nature. Like inner spirituality need not be expressed in your dress or in a shaven head, and profound thoughts need not be in Hebrew or in Sanskrit, and good food need not be hard to eat.

We are always trying to heighten the value of things by making them first unacceptable, then indigestible, and finally complimenting on ourselves on the strength that we have because we have accepted the unacceptable and digested the indigestible. Things should be simple and easy. That is what spirituality of the Sahaj Marg branch is all about. Sahaj Marg means natural way, simple way. Our way should be simple, our talk should be simple, profound thoughts must be conveyed in very simple language. Otherwise, you stand and ignore the danger of putting everything back into Latin and Sanskrit, memorizing them without understanding them, and it's no use.

If you look at the ancient Vedic tradition in India, I mean, this has been going on for tens of thousands of years, there was no printing; it was all conveyed by word of mouth. People mugged it by heart, enough to go on reciting hour after hour for several weeks. They would not make a single mistake in enunciation, in cadence, but they didn't know what they were talking about. It is well known in India that the *pandit*, the learned man, is probably one among a million reciters of the Vedas, so it has been said in the Vedas themselves that one who only recites and does not know or understand the meaning and does not implement what he reads, will be reborn as a frog. [makes frog noises, laughter]

So, we don't want to be learned frogs, you see, thinking what we have learned. And humility does not go in bowing before others. Humility is bowing to the higher Self inside you, remaining in contact with Him, a touch of humility is here that, after all, you are the boss, I am only your car, you see, 1927 model, good enough. So, please be serious without looking serious, because if we look serious we may not be serious.

What I try to say is, be very American in your attitudes, but inside try to be an Indian. What Babuji wanted, you see: "The perfect human being," he said, "is a man with an Indian heart and a Western mind." We need to synthesize the two, we need the technological genius of the West, the scientific genius of Europe, research-orientated thinking, but we also need the introspective nature, the ability to go inside, backwards in time into ourselves, of the East. The danger is that we forget one for the other. It doesn't matter which you forget and which you remember.

If, instead of "John Smith" you say "John Jacks" it's as insulting. It is not enough to remember half the name. John Smith is John Smith. He cannot be Wayne Smith, he cannot be John Wayne, you see. He must be John Smith. Similarly, we need these two. They must balance each other, complement each other, supplement each other, go together.

My Master used to say, like we have two bullocks hooked to a cart — in India, you know, we still have these bullock carts — similarly we need the inner heart and the outer mind. Two co-operating, helping each other. But the heart is always the boss. That we should develop in us. If we have to choose between behaviours and performance, choose performance. Should I look charitable or be charitable? Be charitable. You may look a rogue and it doesn't matter. It's better to look a ruffian and be charitable, than to look charitable and be a ruffian. So, if it is a question of choice, the inner always comes first.

Thank you.

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SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

Atlanta, Georgia, USA
16 December, 1990

As you all know, tomorrow I'll be leaving, and before I leave I thought I should tell you I am happy to be here. Happy to see growth, progress in all of you, happy to see a lot of new people around and, if you don't mind my saying so, happy that I'm leaving, too. [laughter] Yes, I am happy to leave and I am leaving happily. That's a great thing. If the work were not good, I would be leaving unhappily and unhappy to leave. That I'm happy to leave and leaving happily shows that, by my Master's grace, you have all made so much progress and I wish this pace of progress continues.

The brotherhood is cemented closer together because the Mission grows when we find a lot of nationalities, a lot of colours, a lot of tongues, blooming under one umbrella. It was always difficult for me to accept the concept of the Tower of Babel. That a mixture of languages and cultures should lead to confusion is something I can't understand. Because, starting from Noah's ark we have a pair of each, so many life forms, so many life values, I suppose. When God said, "Go forth and multiply," I suppose he didn't want a multiplication of confusion, but a multiplication of the ability to live together, growth together, multiply together. I dare say there are a lot of you here who have a good deal of education in the Christian theology. But this is my understanding, you see, that there must be variety, there must be a great deal of it, and yet we must live together.

As an analogy, I can only offer your own body, where there are cells of so many different types, forming different organs, some solid, some liquid, some just membranes. So many different varieties of processes are going on: muscular, nervous, circulatory, osmotic and that culmination of everything, the process by which the mind thinks. It is not the brain which thinks, you see; it is the mind which thinks. According to our tradition, according to my understanding of what my Master taught me, the grand summation, culmination of this process, by which a poor soul is able to embody itself, using a mind as a sort of an interface for communication. To me, the mind is an interface, a non-substantial, immaterial, non-material interface between two dimensions of existence.

This is the reason why in raja yoga we work upon the mind through the mind itself. Regulation of the mind, not control of the mind. No suppression, no distortion, no exaggeration. Using the mind itself to train itself, to regulate itself. Something like a motherboard in computers. I'm trying to pick up some of that too, now. Once somebody asked me, "What are you doing with a computer?" I said, "Why not?" I know that people have ridden on donkeys, walked barefoot, but a saint doesn't become a saint only by riding a donkey or walking barefoot. I suppose a day will come when some future saint will go up in a satellite or in a space vehicle, you know, to visit his abhyasis on Venus. [laughter] I mean, it has to happen.

If the Divine comes down to the earth in a human form to train us, to accept us, to make us grow into something resembling Himself, I suppose He would like us to be like Himself in His activities, too. In India we have the tradition that there are seven worlds, you see, *sapthaloka*, and a truly enlightened one, the truly ennobled one, the truly exalted one, must be able at will to go through these seven worlds instantly. So, that is again by thought, by will power, the two of which conjoin to form what we call in Sanskrit *sankalpa*. A wish is a wish. If wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

If will alone was enough, every boxer who slams his way to multi-million dollar victories would be president of the USA. But that is brute strength, this is lazy thinking; the two have to combine into some sort of a magnificent, synthetic wholesomeness. A strong will coupled with a unique ability to think, to penetrate into matter itself, or into divinity on the other end. This is the famous Sanskrit term, sankalpa. Babuji has always emphasized the need to have sankalpas, not just wishes. Our wishes are bar to our advancement, but a sankalpa can never be a bar. Why are our wishes putting a bar to our advancement? Because, most often we are sitting in our easy chairs next to the fire, wishing, wishing, wishing.

So, these are all the various capacities which lie latent in us as potentialities in the human being. I think yoga is nothing but the ability, or developing the ability and the capacity, to manifest these latent potencies, latent potentials. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Every Buddha is a worm evolved. Every worm is a Buddha involved." So, there is nothing esoteric or wonderful about this process. It appears miraculous, it appears marvellous, it appears desirable, precisely because we have remained worms, thinking in a wormy way, burrowing ourselves deep into the world of materiality, thinking our worm holes are grand tunnels under the Atlantic and the Pacific, and fooling ourselves into thinking that because our worm hole is bigger than some other worm's hole, we are greater human beings.

Material achievement does this to us. A man who earns two hundred bucks a month thinks he is greater than a man who earns merely a hundred. One who earns a thousand thinks he's a rich man. A millionaire thinks he's God Almighty himself. So, in material achievements, there is only exaggeration of the ego, a tendency to pride, and a tendency to fooling oneself. In the spiritual empire, on the contrary, there is a dimensional change in one's achievement, in one's growth from the material to the spiritual using the medium of the mind. That is the mind-cum-intellect, the combination of which gives us so many yogas with which we are familiar. Karma yoga, gyani yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and, according to the ancient tradition which is exemplified most of all in the Bhagavad Gita that raja yoga is said to be the highest, therefore it is called the king among yogas, raja yoga, because it deals with the kingly faculty in us, the culminating faculty in us, a mind which makes us conscious of ourselves, self-consciousness.

So, there is no empty reason for choosing raja yoga. It is not a whim or a fancy. Why not laya yoga, why not hatha yoga? Yes, the purpose is different. If you want psychic energies there are other yogas. If you want to develop physical prowess, that you can shoot a stone at Neptune and put it out of orbit, there are also yogas. Psychic *shaktis*. But if you wish to develop spiritually and to reach a dimension which is the dimension of infinity, or divinity, as we call it, then as my Master put it, "We have to unlearn everything. Let go." Layer after layer we have to remove from ourselves until, when the last layer is removed, there is nothing. In other things you are adding something — knowledge, power, *siddhis*, *shaktis*.

Here, we are to let go of everything, because according to our understanding of divinity, God has no power, but from Him all power comes. God has no knowledge, but from Him all knowledge comes. God has no strength, but from Him all strength comes. He is not wealthy, but He creates a universe out of his non-wealth. Those who have money can only use what money they have — as you say, capital. Those who have knowledge can only use such knowledge as they have. You can't use knowledge which you don't have already, so you go on acquiring.

But here, by dis-acquiring, a process of dis-acquisition, we reach the ultimate state which I propose that you accept as something like an atom bomb. From a tiny atom which is split, you can get the most extraordinary energies that we have ever seen on this earth so far. Cataclysmic energies, destructive beyond comprehension. If a mere atom can produce that, what should an atom of an atom be able to produce? I suppose that is what in Sanskrit they have tried to state when they say God is smaller than the smallest, the atom of the atom itself. And, on the other end of the scale, greater than the greatest, larger than the largest. So that, in its potential, in its absolute self, what shall I say, cocoonized or self-embroiled form, it is a nothingness, but in its absolute manifest form, it is the universe.

As we say we want to go to the heart of the things, we want to go to the root of the matter, then you have to go to God in his absolutely minuscule atomic of the atomic form. If you want the grand, you know, the luxurious, the glittering, the glamorous, seek Him in the universe. So, the messages of the ancients are very clear. What is the clarity? That you do and you achieve. My Master's message was if you read, you will enjoy; if you do, you can become. Here, it is a process of becoming, not of getting something, not of achieving something, but of becoming that which you ought to be from that which you are today.

So, Sahaj Marg is a very simple, shall we say, message, a very natural goal, because it is the goal of human destiny, human evolution to the highest. It is a goal which we have to inevitably achieve somehow or the other. Which Hindu philosophy says can take eons of time, millions of births, for those who are willing to believe in that sort of thing, but it also says you can achieve it here and now in this very life. Only the weak and the foolish put off for tomorrow what they should do today. The strong, the brave, and those who are set and determined on achieving their aims, do today what they should do even next year.

This is the great message of the American modernity, you see, tomorrow's car here today. Next year's model on display. But when it comes to spirituality, "Oh, the spirituality of two thousand years ago is good enough for us, Chari." In the American mind you have this rather indistinguishable trait, that you have equal value for antiquity and for post-modern moralities. On one side you treasure your antiques, two hundred year old oak tree on your lawn, a piece of pottery dug up from a civil war grave, and also the space shuttle that America will be setting out in the year 2030. Some factual, some conceptual, some actual, some imaginary, but the spiritual thing says, old or young doesn't matter.

Space shuttles, okay. You are still going to do the same journey in space. I travelled to the moon. Wonderful, but where did you go, what did you do there? You landed on another piece of earth, went underground perhaps, went into a domed enclosure with a lot of air being pumped in, or created by bio-matter. But essentially you lead the same life. If you read science fiction you will find, you know, these space colonies, as they are called, it's the same story all over again. Instead of having a television screen you have a whole wall which is TV screen, and instead of having three channels you have a million channels. Instead of pressing buttons you do something else, I suppose think. And the screen flashes, again you see with these eyes, hear with these ears, speak with this mouth, and instead of eating Kentucky Fried chicken, I suppose you eat some other chicken there, some other whiskey there. [laughter]

So, there is no dimensional change. You may go to the ends of this physical universe but your living doesn't change, except that you wear a suit to protect you from the atmosphere of those places, from the pressure or the non-pressure, but essentially, basically you are leading the same life. Spirituality says that is no good. You have to change dimensionally. You have to change substantially, which means in substance. That is true change, that is permanent change, that is irreversible change. What is the proof that it is possible? Well, you have a body, you have a heart, which is not this heart. This heart is subject to tantrums, it beats — itself sometimes, others very often. It can fail, it can collapse, it can do so many wonderful things, funny things. But when you say a person has a good heart or a clean heart or a cold heart, I am sure you don't mean this heart.

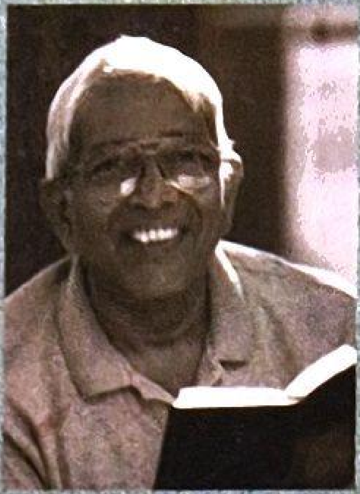
So, we have hearts and hearts. When my heart is broken, it's not this heart. It is another heart. When he is soft-hearted, it is not this heart. It is again another heart. So, we have the physical heart, and this transcendental heart of which you have no knowledge. We love with the physical, we damage the physical. You love with the transcendental heart; there is no damage to anybody. You shine like a light. Hide not thy candle under a bushel. Which candle? Not this candle which you are lighting up, but this candle which must radiate its light for all eternity. But who is to light that lamp? Therefore, you need a Master, a Guru. How to nurture it and keep it aflame? By practise.

So you see, by dimensional change it means a change of heart first, not any heart transplantation by some doctor in South Africa, but a conversion of your heart from a merely physical blood-pumping station in your body, to a heart which resembles the heart of the Divine Creator who created us. This is why we meditate, you see, meditate on the heart for this purpose in this particular system of Sahaj Marg. That is why you meditate on the heart.

There are other points which have been, shall we say, honoured in Hindu yogic literature, the point of the nose, the point between the eyebrows, the third eye point, but they are points which lead us to enormous powers, you see, physic powers, trans-human powers, but not necessarily spiritual powers — in fact, I may beg brave to say not at all spiritual powers. In fact, to use the word 'spiritual power' is wrong because in spirituality there is no power. As I suggested in the beginning, we have to give up all these concepts of having and doing, to not-having and un-doing ourselves. Throwing off layer by layer of ourselves until we come to that essence which has no form, no name, no attributes, which is the definition for the Creator, and therefore at that moment and from that moment on we are like Him in essence.

So, there is the process, there is the goal before you and, as I was happy to remark, there is a progress in that direction, which I am happy to observe, for which I am grateful to my Master, because essentially it His work. I hope it will continue and that next year we shall be even more happy and glad to meet and to part.

Thank you.



Heart to Heart, Volume IV

> *So you see, we have to transfer this whole illusory existence, which we call maya in Sanskrit, back into the inside: I am happy because here I am happy, I am wealthy because here I am wealthy. Here is the God who created me sitting inside me, the master of my existence, the controller of my existence, my internal guide, one who does not come into being with birth nor leave me at death. He is there ever as a part of me, an integral part of me, something which cannot be separated from me. Let me depend on Him. Let me seek the inner light, the inner blessings. Let me go into that universe which is inside me, which is vaster, vaster beyond imaginable terms, than the existing universe here outside.*
>
> P. RAJAGOPALACHARI

The author, P. Rajagopalachari (born in India in 1927), was raised in the rich cultural heritage of the East, although educated extensively in the Western tradition. As the spiritual head and president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission, he has travelled widely, meeting interested seekers throughout the world. This volume contains his talks given to both public audiences and seminars for practitioners of the Sahaj Marg system during 1988, 1989 and 1990 in North America and Europe.

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